NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

THE IMPACT OF TRAIN AND EQUIP PRACTICES TO COUNTER INSURGENCIES

by

Carlos M. Roe

September 2014

Thesis Advisor: James Russell
Second Reader: Thomas Johnson

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED
	September 2014	Master's Thesis

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
THE IMPACT OF TRAIN AND EQUIP PRACTICES TO COUNTER INSURGENCIES

5. FUNDING NUMBERS

6. AUTHOR Carlos M. Roe

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, CA 93943-5000

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
N/A

10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB protocol number ____N/A____.

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT
Insurgency and irregular war continue to be a prevalent phenomenon in the international system. Fighting irregular wars challenge military doctrine used by established militaries across the developed world. These militaries invariably end up combating insurgencies through train and equip missions, although the adoption of train and equip usually happens after the insurgency has become well established. This thesis examines and analyzes approaches taken by the organized militaries from Afghanistan, Turkey, and Columbia in fighting their insurgencies, and the role that the train-and-equip mission played in preparing their respective militaries for their mission. To support the research, each case study is built upon an analysis of the history of each insurgency and the counterinsurgency (COIN) response from the state and military forces. How did the countries train and equip their forces to battle the insurgency? What findings and policy implications can be derived from examining these different COIN case studies?

This thesis finds that the training and equipping mission should be a top priority for all nations fighting an insurgency. In addition, the successes and failures from the three case studies examined show that regardless of the cause of the insurgency, once the insurgency is in full swing, one of the key elements to defeat the insurgency is with a properly trained self-sustaining force.

14. SUBJECT TERMS
Afghanistan, Turkey, Colombia, train, equip, insurgency, counterinsurgency, PKK, FARC, mobile training team, self-sustaining force, military adaptation

15. NUMBER OF PAGES
83

16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	UU

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

THE IMPACT OF TRAIN AND EQUIP PRACTICES TO COUNTER INSURGENCIES

Carlos M. Roe
Lieutenant, United States Navy
B.A., The Citadel, 2007

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SECURITY STUDIES
(MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
September 2014**

Author: Carlos M. Roe

Approved by: James Russell
Thesis Advisor

Thomas Johnson
Second Reader

Mohammed M. Hafez
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

Insurgency and irregular war continue to be a prevalent phenomenon in the international system. Fighting irregular wars challenge military doctrine used by established militaries across the developed world. These militaries invariably end up combating insurgencies through train and equip missions, although the adoption of train and equip usually happens after the insurgency has become well established. This thesis examines and analyzes approaches taken by the organized militaries from Afghanistan, Turkey, and Columbia in fighting their insurgencies, and the role that the train-and-equip mission played in preparing their respective militaries for their mission. To support the research, each case study is built upon an analysis of the history of each insurgency and the counterinsurgency (COIN) response from the state and military forces. How did the countries train and equip their forces to battle the insurgency? What findings and policy implications can be derived from examining these different COIN case studies?

This thesis finds that the training and equipping mission should be a top priority for all nations fighting an insurgency. In addition, the successes and failures from the three case studies examined show that regardless of the cause of the insurgency, once the insurgency is in full swing, one of the key elements to defeat the insurgency is with a properly trained self-sustaining force.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAR	after action report
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANCOP	Afghanistan National Civil Order Police
ANP	Afghanistan National Police
CF	coalition forces
COIN	counterinsurgency
CLC	counterinsurgency-leader course
CN	counter-narcotic
CT	counterterrorism
CTC-A	Counterinsurgency Training Center–Afghanistan
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
FARC-EP	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionaries de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo
IDP	instructor-development program
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JSAS	Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest
MILGP	Military Group
MTT	Mobile Training Team
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	noncommissioned officer
PCC	Partido Communista Colombiano
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan
RMTC	Regional Military Training Center
RTC	Regional Training Center
UP	Union Patriotica

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my beautiful wife, Jennifer, who saved my life and guided me from the rank of E-2, compelling me to always strive for the top and find my true potential. I would also like to thank my mother, Fatima, who immigrated to the United States and instilled in me the meaning of hard work; and my father, Ernie, who was the greatest role model a son could want. I love you both. Thank you to Professors James Russell and Tom Johnson for your insight and support throughout this thesis process, and to Dr. Helen Anderson for teaching the best writing and research course on the planet. The motivation for this thesis came from the hard work of my Mobile Training Team (MTT) in Afghanistan: Hans Wright, Esmatullah, James Phillips, and Wes Faulk the previous region chief. Their dedication laid the groundwork for training and equipping Afghans at the operational level. Thank you all for your hard work and inspiration.

This is dedicated to my brother Rodrigo Rocha Pereira.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I. INTRODUCTION

A. RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis examines and analyzes the steps taken by the militaries of Afghanistan, Turkey, and Columbia in combating the insurgencies inside their borders. In particular, the thesis examines how they trained and equipped their armed forces to meet the challenge of insurgency. It also uses these cases to gain generalizable insights on the role that different approaches to train and equip played for the conventional militaries of these three states

B. BACKGROUND

Effectively countering an insurgency is a daunting task. Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations have proven to be one of the most challenging assignments a military can confront, and can be even more demanding for a government and people who find themselves involved in the difficult circumstances surrounding an insurgency. A typical national response includes increased allocations to the military and new laws and state policies; but unintended consequences arise when external support (or opposition) is introduced into a country's internal disputes, and the conflict usually becomes more intense. Insurgencies are unpredictable and defy formula—they differ from state to state, over time, and even within the same country. One problem in COIN doctrine is the typical longevity of the conflict; a study of ninety countries that have experienced insurgency after 1945 showed an average duration of fourteen years.[1] As this data suggests, insurgencies are extremely difficult to eradicate, regardless of geographic location.

War and irregular combat in particular continue to vex military strategists, such as those who predicted easy victories in Iraq and Afghanistan for U.S. forces. It was assumed that a powerful, better-equipped military would draw upon advanced technology supported by a surfeit of funding to easily defeat insurgencies—but such was not the

[1] Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2008), 11.

case.[2] As described by Robert Taber, the insurgent or guerilla fighter, uses the populace as his "efficient all-seeing" supply and intelligence cache to make up for lack of technology on the battlefield.[3] With this advantage, the insurgent may frustrate and neutralize military opposition, as history has proven time and again.

How long an insurgency endures may depend partly on the cultural and political context of the struggle and whether the insurgency is fueled from internal strife or from an outside invader, which was one of the main reasons the author chose three very different insurgencies to examine and research. Regardless of these circumstances, contemporary COIN theory holds that kinetic operations should not be a military's main goal. Notwithstanding, as Colin Kahl states, concerning U.S. involvement at the beginning of recent COIN operations, "the Army and the Marine Corps had not substantially updated their counterinsurgency doctrine since the 1980s, choosing, in the wake of the Vietnam War, to forget counterinsurgency and focus instead on preparing for World War III."[4] Outdated core doctrines focused heavily on kinetic operations—though killing every insurgent is an impossible task. According to the author, the focal objective in contemporary doctrine should be to win the populace and train and equip host/local forces to carry out day-to-day missions such as policing, which helps resolve civil and ethnic disputes.

From a national-security perspective, it is crucial for any nation faced with insurgency to establish objectives and strategies that align with needs—needs defined in the actual process of training and equipping forces against a foe that disregards sovereign borders and acts across international time zones, through influence or actual violence.

In examining three insurgencies with different origins in disparate world locations, this thesis provides a detailed assessment that ignores the geographical or cultural focuses that can at times hinder COIN research. Afghanistan is a South Asian

---

[2] H. R. McMaster, "The Pipe Dream of Easy War," *New York Times*, July 20, 2013.

[3] Robert Taber, *The War of the Flea: A Study of Guerilla Warfare Theory and Practice* (New York: Citadel Press, 1970), 22–23.

[4] Colin H. Kahl, "COIN of the Realm: Is There a Future for Counterinsurgency?" *Foreign Affairs* 86, no.6 (November–December, 2007), 169. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20032516.

country with an embedded insurgency fueled by strong internal and external factors; Turkey, a Middle Eastern country, faces an insurgency borne of ethnic and social collisions; and Columbia, an Andean country, deals with insurgent reaction to the "haves and have-nots" of society, coupled with a major narcotics fray. Analysis of these case studies helps explain how and why insurgencies escalate and highlights similarities that might lead to sound policies and disarm future conflicts.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

A central problem in battling any insurgency is how to do so without angering the population. There is extensive literature on how to fight insurgencies and minimize civilian casualties, but it has proven difficult for states to successfully operationalize and put theories into practice. The question of what constitutes a victory remains open. An insurgency may have been extinguished; but was the victory outweighed by too great a loss of blood and treasure? What happens when an insurgency is defeated—and how does it stay defeated? Investigating these questions will show the importance of building a force that can simultaneously defeat an insurgency and instill confidence among the people.

The dilemmas researched in this thesis center around the need to empower civil institutions to win trust and confidence, with trust efforts focused on the people's well-being, and confidence focused on providing security.[5] A nation needs a trustworthy police presence to enforce the law and provide justice and stability, in contrast to the easily broken promises that insurgents may make. This analysis is structured to examine why different nations, irrespective of culture and reasons for insurgency, encounter intractable and multifaceted problems in training and equipping their forces for the complex mission of defeating an insurgency. Though the literature discusses specific COIN issues and concerns, in general, there is insufficient emphasis on the importance of doctrine, training and equipping a mission, and little insight as to how to measure mission effectiveness. Some problems of state policies and procedures stem from: 1) a focus on

[5] David Petraeus and James Amos, *Field Manual (FM) 3-24*: *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006), 191.

killing insurgents as a metric; 2) as insurgency increases, lack of a mutual response in military force as a counter; 3) inadequate increase in monetary funds needed to improve insurgency situations; and 4) subjective measures of success, making it challenging to determine what really works at what phase during an insurgency.[6] Another problem is that many nations are unprepared when an insurgency arrives.

It is obviously much easier to develop effective theories and practices in hindsight, but how many more COIN case studies are needed to provide data and policy ideas to implement before a COIN mission begins? There cannot be a perfect tool to measure and warn of an upcoming insurgency or to highlight what measures should be used to improve counter-insurgency efforts, but some valuable, successful strategies have been implemented by nations. Political factors and real strategic goals must be examined before how a nation's reaction to insurgency can be truly criticized.

This thesis examines three hypotheses to examine how a focus on train-and-equip missions might affect the outcome of an insurgency, and to some extent, possibly prevent it.

1. Hypothesis 1

Regardless of culture or geography, nations typically do not focus on train-and-equip policies to fight insurgencies; instead, the military focuses on large conventional military forces with monetary backing to defeat the insurgency. In this scenario, the insurgency continues to escalate and get out of control even with increased kinetic operations coupled with heavy military assets.

2. Hypothesis 2

The intensity of an insurgency depends on what cultural differences sparked the fight or whether the host nation has outside forces supporting COIN efforts, or both. This situation is similar to the current conflict in Afghanistan.

[6] Historical trends that the author will examine for all three case studies.

3. Hypothesis 3

When a COIN mission focuses on the processes to train and equip, especially in the training mission, whether by accident or plan, the insurgency decreases—irrespective of large monetary increases to forces. This scenario is categorized by an improvement in local forces' ability to defeat insurgents, with the support of the populace.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the main focus of this study is to discover similarities and differences among Afghanistan, Turkey, and Columbia regarding their methods in training and equipping to fight an insurgency, there is a need to analyze past and present COIN literature and, in particular, to explore why militaries have such a difficult time with COIN missions. The literature considered for this analysis tackles these intricate questions by taking on three approaches: examination of insurgents, COIN case studies, and military actions and studies. This thesis, with its case studies of how three completely different insurgencies focused on, or neglected to focus on, train-and-equip policies—and the importance of such a focus for COIN mission success—fills a gap in the literature.

1. Literature on Insurgents

There is substantial literature on COIN efforts and tactics, but not a large selection focusing on insurgents. Understanding what insurgents want, how they operate, and possibly identifying their weaknesses is an emphasis much needed. A classic work worth reexamining is Robert Taber's *The War of the Flea*. Truly understanding what an insurgent wants is a complicated task and hard to determine, since many variables, operating in different circumstances, result in diverse demands. Taber acknowledges this difficulty by examining revolutionary circumstances in Vietnam, Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela, exploring what a guerilla is and wants. Tabor argues, "When we speak of the guerilla fighter we are speaking of the political partisan, an armed civilian whose principal weapon is not his rifle or machete but his relationship to the community, the nation, in and for which he fights."[7] Guerilla groups are political entities that want some

[7] Taber, *War of the Flea*, 21.

sort of change. Tabor points out that when COIN forces train to fight an insurgency, they may be perceived as a counter-revolutionary force that cannot match the momentum of the insurgents.[8] While most COIN forces think they are fighting specific targets, in reality they may be fighting a movement that might have more support from the populace than presumed.

Mao Tse-tung's *Guerilla Warfare* is another important work that explains what insurgents/guerillas want, one that influenced much of Taber's writings. An element that most COIN doctrine and tactics miss is the importance of propaganda. As much as the insurgents want to kill and disrupt government and allied forces, they spend much more time on propaganda and efforts to "explain, persuade, discuss, and convince."[9] This goal is expressed graphically in the organizational chart developed by Chairman Mao, in which the propaganda officer is subordinate only to the battalion commander and has as much responsibility as the executive officer.[10] Yet there have been few or no COIN attempts to neutralize or match this thrust.

Another false assumption made by militaries conducing COIN operations is that insurgents are weak because they lack strength in equipment, funding, and technology. Taber counters that belief by noting,

> For while the Army suffers from an embarrassment of wealth, and especially of expensive military hardware for which there is no employment, the guerilla has the freedom of his poverty. He owns nothing but his rifle and the shirt on his back, has nothing to defend but his existence.[11]

The perceived weakness is actually the insurgent's strength; they do not have land to defend in the military sense; they can move easily across terrain; and they do not require much capital, whether human or financial. By contrast, for the U.S. and most militaries, the money and logistics needed to run a military operation is expensive and

---

[8] Taber, *War of the Flea*, 21.

[9] Tse-tung Mao, *Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication (FMFRP) 12-18: Mao Tse-tung on Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Washington, DC: Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, 1989), 13.

[10] Ibid., 124.

[11] Ibid., 22.

can be ineffective, because technology cannot separate the insurgents from the population. *The War of the Flea* and *Guerilla Warfare* provide realistic explanations of who insurgents are and why militaries across the world should reexamine their policies towards insurgents. These insights apply to the insurgencies in the cases considered here.

2. COIN Case Studies

It is important to examine this research under the lens of past and present literature. The primary questions are, first, what happened, and second, how do differences and similarities among the studies apply to current COIN objectives?

Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies examines thirty insurgency cases studies (including some in Afghanistan and Turkey), chosen according to the following criteria:

- The cases were not coups.
- They involved over 1000 deaths.
- Implicated violence was driven by an armed uprising to change the government or take over a geographical area.[12]

While insurgencies come in all different sizes, flavors, and reasons, this thesis focuses on train-and-equip policies that create and maintain a sustainable force for the future. This type of analysis helps build a case by identifying what cases were considered a COIN win or loss. To determine these outcomes, Christopher Paul and others examined the cases under the following logic: 1) if the government stays in power without major concessions to the insurgency, it is a COIN win or mixed win; 2) if the government had to compromise government rule or lose territory or governance ability due to insurgent demands, it is considered a COIN loss.[13]

---

[12] Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2010), xi, xii.

[13] Ibid., xiv, xv.

Each case study presents a brief summary, and a discussion of what phases and factors shaped the outcome of the conflict, and explanations and analyses.[14] It is important not to get overwhelmed in the details of lessons learned, because insurgencies are so dynamic and differ from region to region.[15] This caveat is one of the main reasons the author chose to study three very different insurgencies.

Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare contains thirteen COIN studies, ranging from the Philippines in the early 20th century to current missions in Columbia and Afghanistan. The work contains detailed descriptions, but not a single focal point on reasons, or data-highlighting explanations, or methods that worked. Rather, it shows various reasons and ups and downs that nations faced and provides a great starting point for policy implications and strategies.[16]

Examining the past, especially the hodgepodge nature of insurgencies, with their similarities and differences, can help illuminate Afghanistan, Turkey, and Columbia's insurgencies.

3. Military Actions and Studies

Understanding what the militaries did in a case study is vital to building a framework for understanding what worked, and why; perhaps even more important is scholarly critique and explanation of why the players acted as they did.

What makes it so difficult for military forces to defeat an insurgency? Maiah Jaskoski's *Military Politics & Democracy in the Andes* studies military actions in the Andes, especially Peru and Ecuador, and observes that soldiers may not want to engage in COIN operations because of restrictions and constraints or "mission overload."[17] Could this be a trend in other countries? In her case studies, Jaskoski argues that Columbia's military did engage in COIN operations, but tackled the tough policing

---

[14] Ibid., xv, xvi.

[15] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, xvii.

[16] Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, eds., *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* (Oxford: Osprey, 2008), 18.

[17] Maiah Jaskoski, *Military Politics & Democracy in the Andes* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 21.

mission only when it knew that funding from the U.S. would follow.[18] This offers some interesting possibilities for understanding how countries train and equip. There is without question a need for monetary incentives to actually accomplish the equipping part—but the tougher part is the training mission once finances are in order and if an increase in funding changes the insurgency.

Thomas Marks's *Colombian Army Adaptation to FARC Insurgency* details the adaptation that the Columbian Army developed to battle the FARC.[19] The issues for the military included unexpected insurgent surges, lack of a professionally trained police force, and outdated American tactics that focused on conventional war strategies.[20] Peeling the onion of Columbia's insurgency, a few related issues are revealed: problems in military adaptation, policing (which, if not done by separate forces, should be undertaken by the Army), and the tendency for old strategies and plans to hinder success.

In a related theme, James Russell's *Innovation, Transformation, and War* asserts that new doctrine may not be the only reason for success. He argues that innovation from units on the ground can lead to improved and/or successful COIN operations, as opposed to higher authorities dictating new doctrines.[21] This logic is applied in particular to COIN operations in Iraq from 2005–2007, but Russell gives much insight into the possibility that other COIN cases could have the same results—that it was not the state or government that effected changes, but rather, forces on the ground, in real-time.

These works provide the foundation needed to examine why nations carry out COIN missions as they do, and in particular, provide salient questions and methods for carrying out research. Among these questions are,

- What were the insurgent's goals?
- Did the COIN mission end in victory?

---

[18] Ibid., 185–186.

[19] Thomas A. Marks, *Colombian Army Adaptation to FARC Insurgency* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2002), 5.

[20] Marks, *Colombian Army Adaptation*, 9–10.

[21] James A. Russell, *Innovation, Transformation, and War: Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq, 2005–2007* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 3.

- Was the army overloaded, with too many restraints to conduct operations?
- Did monetary funding improve COIN operations?
- Did adaptation and innovation play a role?

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

Examination of the research question in this thesis is conducted according to the comparative case-study method, by analyzing COIN objectives and strategies used in Afghanistan, Turkey, and Columbia. Similarities and differences as they relate to insurgency decrease are investigated, and policy implications for future COIN operations are drawn. Of particular interest is whether the U.S. has learned and applied lessons from the past to current objectives. Austin Long offers an intriguing statement concerning lessons learned on COIN missions: "Preparing for the challenge of COIN can no longer be allowed to wax and wane as it did during the Cold War. Instead, the United States must seriously study what lessons can be gleaned from the study of COIN."[22] There is no doubt that information and data are readily available for study by academics. The past twelve-plus years of insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan have provided valuable information and real-world testimonies on what really happened, and examining the processes used to defeat or reverse insurgency in three major cases usefully highlights the importance of train-and-equip missions.

The ultimate goal of these case studies is to produce a claim or principle regarding COIN train-and-equip missions, to inform future policy. Using an inductive approach with comparisons, it is hoped that a more balanced and broader look will reveal important information. David Collier observes that a few case studies can "address important substantive questions," and the comparison technique applied in the small number of cases can yield superior fundamental analyses.[23] The challenge is to find the linkage

[22] Austin Long, *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2006), 73.

[23] David Collier, "The Comparative Method," in *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* II, ed. Ada W. Finifter (Washington, DC: American Political Science Association, 1993), 117.

between the different techniques used, after which a more "contextualized analysis", may be discovered.[24]

Sources used for this thesis include scholarly and newspaper articles, government documents, case studies, and books on insurgency issues in Afghanistan, Turkey, and Columbia. The goal is to analyze the previously stated hypotheses and explore the similarities and differences in the case studies.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

Chapter I introduces the central research question and related methodology and the layout for this thesis. This chapter details the goal of the investigation, with a literature review of past and present COIN theories—especially literature that examines why and how insurgencies have been fought throughout history.

Chapter II examines the social terrain of Afghanistan and the Soviet and Taliban years, 1979–2001. This chapter also takes an in-depth look at a training mission conducted by the author during a 2012 deployment in Helmand Province. This case study reveals the importance of training and equipping in a hostile environment and provides some unfiltered lessons that explain how tough the train-and-equip mission can truly be.

Chapter III probes Turkey's difficult fight with the *Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan* (PKK), better known as the Kurdistan Workers' Party. The chapter starts with the history and causes leading up to the insurgency of the PKK and stresses the internal social and ethnic disturbances related to insurgencies—and how Turkey was able to weather the storm.

Chapter IV examines Columbia's multifaceted battle with the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionaries de Colombia* (FARC). Like the other two studies, it begins with an examination and brief history. This case study emphasizes how Columbia fought the FARC and dealt with the complexity of haves and have-nots.

Chapter V concludes the inductive research, analyzing findings from the case studies. Key points from each chapter are connected to show how important the train-

[24] Ibid.

and-equip part of COIN operations is in counterinsurgency. The thesis ends with policy findings and implications for future operations.

II. AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan's history is characterized by many occupations by foreign invaders, vast cultural differences across the country, and numerous insurgencies. Fighting insurgencies in Afghanistan challenged such diverse actors across history as Alexander the Great, the British, the Soviets, and the United States. By exploring Afghanistan's dynamic ethnic composition, insurgent battles with the Soviet Union and Taliban, and a training mission conducted by the author during a deployment in 2012, possible indicators and future train-and-equip best practices are revealed that show the importance of training and equipping in a hostile environment.

A. THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan is a very dynamic country, with multifaceted social and ethnic differences that make each area and region of territory distinct. Many of these groups are given almost complete autonomy by the government. That is not to say that the citizens of Afghanistan do not identify as Afghans, but to lump the different ethnic groups into one collection would be a grave mistake. The sense of belonging and characteristic traits of Afghan tribes center on local and tribal strengths. According to the author, who worked with thousands of Afghans, the assumption that the average Afghan cares most deeply about his village and family first was confirmed. The *Qawm,* or kinship, is their center of gravity, because family, village, and cultural dictate everyday decisions and explain how most Afghans act toward each other.[25] The key takeaway is that Afghans care most about local entities and have a difficult time understanding and practicing nationalistic methods. Abdul Wali Khan famously stated, "I have been a Pakistani for thirty years, a Muslim for fourteen hundred years, and a Pashtun for five thousand years."[26] Unlike Turkey and Colombia, in Afghanistan, culture and ethnic composition is critically important and must be understood before diving into current objectives. All

[25] Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 18.

[26] Ibid., 20.

nations have ethnic factors, but Afghanistan is exceptional, and much study is needed to understand Afghan social dynamics.

Afghanistan contains many large and small ethnic groups, but because they are spread throughout the country, it is difficult to get an accurate number of current and past population figures. Many Afghans have traveled outside tribal borders, causing waves of population to ebb and flood, undermining accurate census counts.[27] The largest ethnic group in Afghanistan is the *Pashtuns*. Making up approximately 40 percent of the population, they have many lineages that "unite larger clans" into a vast parentage group comprising mostly farmers and rural dwellers. These Afghans speak Pashtu and follow a strict code of *Pashtunwali*, which governs their everyday way of living and guides their actions.[28] Another major ethnic group is the *Tajiks,* who constitute 30 percent of Afghanistan's total population and mostly speak a Persian dialect. Located in rural villages, working as farmers, or in major cities, employed as merchants, they are slightly better educated than the Pashtuns.[29] Next in numbers are the *Hazaras*, making up fifteen percent of the population and living mostly in the mountainous Hindu Kush region. The Hazaras are Shia Muslim descendants of the Mongol armies and work the land, trading and breeding livestock. They speak a dialect of Persian.[30] The remaining large ethnic groups are the *Uzbeks* and *Turkmen,* who make up around ten percent of the population and are "Sunni Turkish-speaking groups that descend from nomadic tribal confederations."[31] There are many other small groups, such as the *Aimaqs*, *Pashai*, *Baluch*, and Arabs.[32] There is not enough time or space in this research to explore Afghanistan's vast ethnic groups in detail, but to point to the county's difficult social terrain is the key take away.

---

[27] Ibid., 23.

[28] Ibid., 24–25.

[29] Ibid., 26.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Barfield, *Afghanistan*, 27.

[32] Ibid., 27–29.

Bernt Glatzer argues that tribal systems are politically important. Observing that the tribes make up about two thirds of the population, Glatzer asserts:

> Although the tribal principle is clear and unambiguous, it by no means forms "real" social groups. Instead it is one of the recruiting principles of corporate and of conflicting groups, though never the only one. It draws ordering lines over a large part of the society and defines boundaries within ethnic units.[33]

Glatzer argues that political agreements usually come as a by-product of the tribal system. The difficulty with this system is that when a tribal leader makes bad decisions and loses authority, or if he dies, the transition to the next ruler is never smooth.[34] Glatzer cites research and interviews with Pashtuns from different areas that show that Afghans from the southeast and eastern areas focus on "local categories," whereas Afghans from the south and west "stress their tribal and ethnic identity first and foremost."[35] There is no method to simplify the differences among the peoples of Afghanistan are, and more important, how these differences relate to past and current insurgencies.[36]

It is inaccurate simply to say that Afghans are diverse because Afghanistan comprises so many different social and ethnic groups—Afghans are distinct even within these groups and within geographic locations and similar sets. As subsequent chapters will show, working with local tribes is therefore very difficult. In a COIN environment, what works in one area might not work in another, and even within that same area, success can turn to disaster very easily.

B. THE SOVIETS AND THE TALIBAN

Both the former Soviet Union and the Taliban ruled and governed Afghanistan to some extent from the late 1970s until late 2001. These entities operated very differently from the perspective of most Afghan citizens, but both had devastating effects on human rights and basic government-to-citizen responsibilities. During this period, insurgencies

---

[33] Bernt Glatzer, "War and Boundaries in Afghanistan: Significance and Relativity of Local and Social Boundaries," *Die Weld Des Islams* 41, no. 3 (November, 2001), 384.

[34] Ibid., 8.

[35] Ibid., 10.

[36] Ibid.

and tribal conflicts decimated any hope that Afghanistan would transform into a more progressive state. Exploring the failures of the Soviets and Taliban illustrates the importance of a capable force that provides basic needs to the citizen, and suggests that such a force is able to achieve that objective only if properly trained and equipped.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979–1989 provides a pungent example of what not to do. In the face of technological sophistication, highly skilled soldiers, and overwhelming numbers, insurgencies can and will show that victory is not a numbers game and that guerilla warfare can overwhelm traditional forces.[37] Many Afghans grew tired of Soviet intervention and wanted to break the "pro-communist" ties between the Afghanistan government and the Soviet Union.[38] A quick overthrow of the communist-backed regime in 1979 led to the majority of the country breaking ties with local and distant Soviets institutions.[39] The Russians knew this was a sign of weakness and had to teach the world what would happen if another country under their grasp tried the same. The Soviets started their campaign with heavy equipment, including tanks, fortified artillery units, and many ground forces to overwhelm and dominate the areas of operation. They lacked a unified COIN strategy, however, and did not consider how these assets might be useless in an insurgency.[40] Heavy firepower and weapons are obviously needed to win any conflict or battle, but the Soviets quickly found that there was simply not enough available to complete the mission—indeed, there rarely is enough heavy equipment in an insurgency to turn the tide. Research suggests that it would have taken 900,000 Soviets to completely occupy Afghanistan, which translates to a 10:1 ratio against the insurgents.[41]

Soviet strategy and tactics against the mujahedeen fighters changed abruptly midway through the conflict as the Soviets began to realize that they needed a better strategy to train and educate the people. The problem with their methods was that they

---

[37] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, 11.

[38] Ibid., 12.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 13.

[41] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, 19.

assumed most Afghans would relate to or favor communist ideals upon exposure to their educational and "hearts and minds" campaign.[42] They were wrong, because they did not truly understand, or care to understand, the culture and tribes of Afghanistan. Bombing and committing brutal atrocities against the Afghans while proclaiming an educational program to help them fooled no one—especially not the Afghans. The conflict, of course, would have turned out differently were it not for intervention by Pakistan and U.S. With Pakistani training and U.S. weapons (mostly rifles and stingers), the mujahedeen were able to keep constant pressure against the Soviets.[43]

The Soviets did not understand how local customs and ethnic divisions would shape their desired results, and their policy of "crush them" was trumped by the mujahedeen's message that they will outlast the occupation.[44] When rallying against an occupier, tribes and clans will have more passion and desire to join with groups that they might not normally relate to—they are temporarily united against one enemy. In this case, the Russians miscalculated the effectiveness of hard power and failed to truly shape and train the Afghans for the better. The problem from the start was that they wanted to kill everyone against the regime instead of using political and diplomatic tools to create a self-sustaining Afghanistan that might have continued as an ally.

Ten long years of fighting the Soviets exhausted the Afghans. As a result of their numerous tribal and ethnic divisions, the disruption of Pakistani and U.S. involvement (with their different real objectives and mixed benefits), and the mujahedeen's lack of governing abilities, the country was enveloped by total chaos. Drug lords and previous mujahedeen commanders ruled districts with an iron fist and, more times than not, fought each other as violently as they did the Soviets [45]. The Kandahar and Helmand provinces were the most dysfunctional areas, with no governance or ability to maintain order from

---

[42] Ibid., 14–15.

[43] Ibid., 15–17.

[44] Ibid., 19–20.

[45] Riaz Mohammad Khan, *Afghanistan and Pakistan: Conflict, Extremism, and Resistance to Modernity* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 56.

any leader or group.[46] The formation of the Taliban, who were seen by some as the stuff of legend, simply reveals that the people were tired of the drug lords and commanders taxing and brutalizing their people. The Taliban began as a small group that formed to take out another group that had killed, robbed, and raped a family traveling in southern Afghanistan.[47] The important insight is that, owing to lack of government controls, the Taliban was not only formed, but also won the prize of all COIN and insurgent objectives—the people.

By 1996, the Taliban started to expand and form cells all over Afghanistan. The south and southwest served as their strongholds and proved their legitimacy, since rampant disorder and chaos had plagued that region.[48] Along with military success against other drug lords, mujahedeen groups, and former commanders, the Taliban started to gain support in resources and supplies from Pakistan.[49] The Taliban accrued the resources they needed to establish legitimate rule and began to govern the populace. Control of the capital was the most sought-after prize of the Taliban; by the end of 1997, the Taliban was able to achieve this goal by seizing Kabul, and with it, control of the country. Because of the bloodshed and violence, many small groups continued fighting or fled to neighboring Pakistan and Iran.[50]

A major by-product of the insurgency with the Soviets and the civil war was the emergence of Al Qaeda. These fighters witnessed firsthand the atrocities of the Soviets, and received support from the U.S. to take up arms as a unified Muslim group against the Soviets.[51] The Taliban had not been in a position to receive international recognition, mostly because of their human-rights violations, especially against women, and now they allowed Al Qaeda to train and equip their forces in Afghanistan. As Osama Bin Laden and Mullah Omar started to work together, the international community started to get

---

[46] Ibid., 57.

[47] Ibid., 58.

[48] Ibid., 60–61.

[49] Ibid., 61.

[50] Ibid., 65–66.

[51] Khan, *Afghanistan and Pakistan*, 78.

nervous. Bin Laden supplied the finances, and Omar provided the people and space to build an army. Because of the Taliban's relationship with Al Qaeda, Pakistan was the key country working and supporting the Taliban; but even Pakistan started to distance itself—as much as they could, since Afghanistan is a neighbor that constantly pulls and pushes events in Pakistan as well.[52] The international community decisively turned its back on Afghanistan when the Taliban destroyed the Buddhas of Bamiyan in 2001 and strengthened its efforts to support Al Qaeda, even though some Taliban leaders wanted nothing to do with Al Qaeda.[53] Insurgencies, civil war, and lack of international community support and recognition created an environment that the Taliban and Al Qaeda capitalized on.[54]

For the purposes of this analysis, the main point is that the Afghan people have been through an unpleasant history, shaped in modern times by the barrel of the Soviet rifle, numerous tribe and drug-lord battles, and the emergence of the Taliban. The suffering people of Afghanistan had no alternatives to solve the predicament that started in 1979; the Taliban's decision to allow Al Qaeda to develop a stronghold only made the situation worse.

C. A TRAINING MISSION EXAMINED

The background of Afghanistan is important in understanding how social dynamics affect the populace and how previous conflicts and actions shaped the Afghanistan of today. This section examines a mission in Afghanistan conducted by the author in 2012, with the purpose of training and equipping Afghans in Helmand Province. Missions always differ, but this account provides details that link with the accounts of other researchers and authors to potentially lead to better strategies.

The mission directives were as follows: "Counterinsurgency Training Center–Afghanistan (CTC-A) enhances coalition forces (CF), Afghan National Security Forces, and other Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) agencies

[52] Ibid., 79–82.

[53] Ibid., 81.

[54] Ibid., 98.

capabilities to reduce insurgent influence through the delivery of regionally-focused, timely, and relevant best practice counterinsurgency training and education that fosters greater unity of effort among all stakeholders in order to facilitate the development of a secure and stable Afghanistan."[55]

In such a complex and dynamic mission, adaptation would be key to success. Training Afghans was an important element, but even more important was to select the right Afghan actors to carry on the training mission once International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) departed. The leaders of the COIN academy in Kabul briefed all staff that the academic training mission was going to end sooner than expected. No matter how external and internal factors played out, the number-one priority was to train and instruct Afghans, at all costs. What happened next is the focus of this case study. The author was a region chief for a mobile training team (MTT)—by far his most challenging deployment ever. His experience sets forth a valuable account of current train-and-equip practices in action.[56]

To become a COIN instructor in Afghanistan, the first step was to complete the counterinsurgency-leader course (CLC) at the COIN academy in Kabul. The CLC was packed with exercises and lessons on everything and anything to do with insurgency. Practical tests consisted of teach-backs, in which the staff ensured that new instructors could instruct effectively through an interpreter. Every U.S. member of ISAF had received weapons and cultural training before arriving in theater; the aim of this course was to learn to work with an interpreter and understand COIN fundamentals. The ultimate goal was to train Afghan forces with the same material and have them continue the mission once ISAF departed. Each MTT consisted of a small team with a regional chief in charge of the mission. The author was assigned as an instructor and region chief for Helmand Province.

---

[55] U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Training Center–Afghanistan (CTC-A), *A Counterinsurgent's Guidebook: The application of COIN doctrine and theory, Version 2* (Kabul, Afghanistan: CTC-A, 2011), 1.

[56] Author was the COIN MTT Region Chief for most of the deployment and operations officer and instructor during the middle of the deployment.

The mission was not only to provide COIN training to all forces, but to certify strong Afghan army and police instructors under the instructor-development program (IDP), so they could teach and carry on the mission once coalition forces departed. The team consisted of numerous active and reserve U.S. Army officers, along with some DynCorp civilians with military backgrounds.[57] The mission included instruction at Regional Military Training Center (RMTC) Camp Shorabak, 215th Afghan National Army (ANA) Corps, and Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest (JSAS) (which were Afghan special forces, mostly at Camp Leatherneck), and the Regional Training Center (RTC) LashkarGah4/5 Afghanistan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) Center, which trained police and border police, along with a few small fire bases located throughout the region. Even with many constraints (such as shrinking budgets and timetables), the need to train as many Afghans as possible was primary. Certifying instructors to carry on the COIN torch was the secondary focus. The heart of the mission was to train Afghans—especially police—at every given opportunity.

Managing unified objectives is challenging in an ISAF environment. Danish, British, and U.S. forces worked in the same areas, and even at times the same buildings, training and instructing Afghans in completely different subjects. The challenge was to coordinate and schedule COIN needs to instruct, with what they were already teaching. Since many teams travel to different locations, this required much coordination with CF. The author understood the importance of scheduling courses as quickly as possible. The Danish team who were mentoring RMTC personnel scheduled six COIN courses (two- to three-day tracks) between their infantry basic course and/or other instruction that focused on training noncommissioned officers (NCOs). The other area of focus was Lashkar Gah, since it was the major training site for police and border police—a critical area, since police and border police received the least amount of COIN training. The British were able to schedule nine training tracks over the following four months. There were only three COIN instructors from the Afghan police, compared to the forty instructors for the ANA qualified by the previous team.

[57] Cannot emphasize how lucky the author was to have this team. Some MTTs had no experience—many CF members who were on their first operational deployment.

With the training and logistics part of the mission scheduled, what to focus on next became the challenge. The author ordered his team to increase anti-corruption training using practical exercises and videos in Pashtu and Dari, produced by the training center in Kabul. This training was the major focus for Afghan police and border police. While police training was going on, other officers working for the same team continued the same push at local training commands in camps Bastion and Leatherneck. The final piece of the puzzle was to identify an Afghan who would take over the MTT once ISAF departed. The Afghan training officer at RMTC was chosen, and he provided Afghan soldiers to attend the instructor course and start training other Afghans with the MTT. He managed all training and classes for about 5,000–7,000 recruits a year and provided superb support that got more classes scheduled. Very importantly, he selected top ANA sergeants whom he felt would be good instructors.

The entire process flowed as follows: first, a class of ten to thirty students (police or army) was trained on three major COIN lessons: insurgency, COIN, and a framework brief. Second, the top NCOs were selected, sometimes only one or two, and trained/instructed on the spot through the instructor course, which covered how to teach, what not to do, and how to capture the audience. Finally, the selected instructors taught back to the class the main lessons that the MTT originally taught. Having completed the process, the Afghan personnel received a certificate with their picture, noting that they were qualified instructors for COIN. The critical point was how the MTT incorporated the Afghans into future training. These same ANA/Afghanistan National Police (ANP) instructors would start teaching the basic COIN classes for the next scheduled course, which allowed the MTT to slowly step back and put some pressure on the Afghan training officer to coordinate future classes and decide which instructors would teach.

Even with numerous training barriers, including being in a combat zone, the MTT qualified forty-one instructors and trained roughly 1,200 Afghans during the six-month tour. The mission overall yielded roughly 90 instructors with over 4,000 soldiers trained in COIN during a two-year period. It was not easy, especially as green-on-blue incidents increased, but it was an overall successful mission because the trainers focused on having buy-in from the local Afghan forces. The emphasis was on training Afghans, and more

importantly, choosing the right ones to work the MTT out of a job—ensuring Afghans training Afghans.

D. PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Every mission, no matter what or where, will have problems. The majority of training and equipping problems, the author argues, can be solved at the tactical and operational level. Thus military adaptation must be promoted at these levels. That is not to say that strict compliance to certain directives and procedures is not needed, but training human subjects and assembling a piece of ordnance have very different outcomes when those checklists are not followed.[58] The social terrain in Afghanistan requires much adaptation because of the diverse differences within regions.

First and foremost, the MTT led by the author was highly adaptive and did not follow the uniform guidelines and checklists on how to train Afghans. The recommendations that this case study of Helmand province provides may not work equally well in another part of Afghanistan, such as Herat Province. Nevertheless, there are some crucial lessons to consider in understanding the "how" part of the train-and-equip mission.

1. Problems Encountered

The first issue encountered was linguistic difficulties; the majority of Helmand students spoke Pashto and the entire curriculum given to instructors for the MTTs was in Dari. Most interpreters did not speak both Pashto and Dari, and the majority of the interpreters from the COIN academy could not speak Pashto well.

Illiteracy and delivery methods were another huge issue. The majority of ANA and ANP are virtually illiterate; the country has a literacy rate of roughly 39%, which meant, for the most part, that six or seven soldiers out of ten could not read or write.[59] The entire course, especially for certifying instructors, was PowerPoint dependent.

---

[58] Author has experience doing both missions.

[59] UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office (ACO), *Education Factsheet* (Kabul, Afghanistan: ACO, 2011). http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/ACO_Education_Factsheet_-_November_2011_.pdf.

Training institutions in Helmand did not have computers or projectors and fuel delivery for generators was unreliable.

In addition, the course of instruction was too long for Afghans. It was extremely difficult to get courses scheduled. The IDP course had numerous PowerPoint briefs and three practical exercises, and required five full days to complete (the hours computed were in US metrics, meaning for Afghans it would take about ten days), not counting the days used to teach Afghans in a large setting. The material was too advanced for Afghans and it was not realistic to expect them to continue training once ISAF departed.

A major problem was that the curriculum and instruction were intended for a soldier or Marine to understand and to practice COIN downrange. This is not the same as teaching Afghans how to teach COIN. The focus should be on teaching, vice "how-to" incorporate best COIN practice from CF; the same material that the author learned at the CLC in Kabul was what the Afghans were getting.

There was insufficient focus on police/border police and anti-corruption training. A COIN team is needed in every police training center. A fully embedded team that lives with the police did not exist; the MTT traveled whenever possible and the author tried many times to station two team members permanently at the centers, but did not get support or approval from higher authority.[60]

2. Recommendations

The recommendations from this case study apply to the author's mission to Afghanistan, but more importantly, they can provide valuable lessons for future COIN train and equip missions.

a. Know the Culture

Know your audience—understand their culture. The MTT had to convert everything in Pashtu and Dari since the students were so diverse in Helmand. Some even

[60] It was very difficult to work with foreign nations when they owned/were in charge of the mission. It seemed to the author that everyone was desperately trying to control one aspect without interference from other entities. Lack of teamwork across the board was an issue when it came down to actually training Afghans.

spoke Pashtu and wrote in Dari, or vice versa. It was 2012, eleven years after the conflict started, and CF still did not truly understand the culture.

b. Make the COIN (IDP Course) Realistic

The IDP course was changed to three days from a realistic ten-day block because it was too difficult to reserve the needed days, attention spans were too short, and other required training courses from the Afghans were competing for time. The last two days were used for Afghan students to teach the masses, vice CF. The takeaway here is that the material must be realistic and the forces in training must be willing to continue the training once the support nation departs. The goal is to develop sustainable training and qualify instructors who will carry on. They must have confidence and not be overwhelmed.

c. Be Mindful of Illiteracy and Method of Delivery

Ensure that some pictures are used for important messages, since a large majority of the audience cannot read. Print all lessons in both languages and ensure PowerPoint-dependent courses are not the primary method of delivery. Develop flipcharts for all training lessons and make copies to hand out when possible. The MTT used the multimedia center at Camp Leatherneck to print out large paper versions of all lessons and hand-built wooden stands to attach them to. This was the most successful training change incorporated, because Afghans like to see large pictures and catch phrases. From a practical standpoint, since locations did not have a power supply, it was important that training method be sustainable by the Afghans.

d. Ensure Afghan Buy-in

Afghans will continue training once ISAF departs if they are confident in delivering the content. The author's MTT used Afghan NCOs and training officers to decide which lessons they thought worked best. The MTT was there to guide or shift direction if needed, but the Afghans will continue the mission only if they believe in it. We cannot train Afghan forces like American forces.

e. Form Small Training Teams

The author observed that smaller teams allowed the forces to leave the main bases and blend in better with the locals. This mindset allowed teams to travel more often and promote unity, since the forces are able to work with Afghans at their bases.

f. Focus on Policing

The author's MTT went "all-in" to train police and border police at the different training locations. This part of the mission was not a priority for many senior leaders or previous training teams, but most insurgencies have a repeated theme of corrupt or violent police forces, which leads to loss of popular support.

While these recommendations are not made with a claim of universal applicability, stemming as they do from one specific training mission, it should be noted that the mission was successful overall and the recommendations furnish practical insight on how to train to equip future COIN operations.[61]

E. CONCLUSION

Unlike the following two chapters, which focus on train-and-equip missions at a national level, this example was a first-hand account of a mission at the lowest level of instruction. Thus it contains no bureaucratic barriers, explanations from afar, or mixed numbers that might distort the truth. The author's team achieved success by adapting to its environment and focusing on training objectives. Obviously, higher authority has a much broader view and much more responsibility for the mission in Afghanistan, but the fact remains that training local forces is a demanding and much required mission for success in a COIN environment. Further analysis of the cultural misunderstandings, reliance on heavy equipment and conventional forces, and lack of real training objectives that have plagued nations working in Afghanistan is presented in the last chapter.

There has been some debate on how important the policing mission is and whether contractors doing the majority of this mission was part of the mistake in

[61] Recommendations and problems were used in the author's after action report (AAR) at the end of the mission.

Afghanistan. Many low-paid non-Afghan civilian police and security personnel began working for the same contracting firm as a member of the author's MTT, and the $100,000 plus salaries that they were making, coupled with the quality of their performance, were not warranted. [62]Much more research is needed to truly examine this debate, but these facts were consistent with the poor performance seen during the earlier years from Afghan police with contractors that trained them who bragged, "I do this job for the opportunity to kill the enemies of my country and also get that boat I always wanted."[63] The contractors who worked with the author were superb, consisting of former military officers or senior enlisted retired personnel. But, like the mission examined in this chapter, experience and results will vary. The author has seen many contractors who were horrible performers and ambassadors for the ISAF mission. There were probably just as many bad training teams traveling throughout Afghanistan as well, not focusing on the prize: security for the Afghans.

The recommendations in this case study are distilled from what a specific team in Helmand Province actually accomplished. The lessons could be posed as questions to construct a baseline model for future teams that must train forces during an insurgency: What are the culture and population like? How do they learn? What are their capabilities? These questions should be answered when taking on a training mission. There is no way to kill every insurgent; culture and local autonomy are more important than a centralized government to some; and policing, coupled with real training and equipping objectives, can achieve satisfactory results. *Shohna-ba-Shohna* (shoulder-to-shoulder) was the only way to meet these realities.[64]

---

[62] Hannah Gurman, ed., *Hearts and Minds: A People's History of Counterinsurgency* (New York: New Press, 2013), 193.

[63] Ibid.

[64] NTM—A slogan meaning "shoulder to shoulder" and used by the author's team to begin all training evolutions.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

III. TURKEY AND THE PKK

Many states throughout the world have battled insurgencies and are fighting legacy conflicts because of various unfinished conflicts. Some of the fragmentary causes preventing a ceasefire or peaceful resolution include overzealous military forces, unsettled ethnic issues, and a lack of state institutions that provide basic, day-to-day needs for the populace. Turkey, like most states that have felt the damage of an insurgency, has experienced all three.[65] The Kurdistan Workers' Party or *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan* (PKK) battled the government and the people of Turkey for their belief and simple platform that bellowed existence. [66] They felt the Turkish government was preventing the social and ethnic freedom they were entitled to and that they were excluded from the Turkish constitution.[67]

The Turkish state has had tremendous results in its dealings with the PKK, though Turkey continues to face challenges in this regard. Turkish military forces from 1984–1999 were able to defeat the PKK insurgency because they adapted tactics with proper train–and-equip objectives to eliminate the PKK's physical and psychological bonds with the population and correctly used heavy kinetic measures when warranted. [68] By examining the history leading up to the insurgency, the dynamics of the PKK insurgency, and Turkey's counterinsurgency response, a better understanding of military adaptation with appropriate train-and-equip practices and policy implications may result.

A. HISTORY OF THE PKK

Before delving into the insurgency and the state's response, a brief examination of Kurdish ethnic issues, the background of the PKK's leader and founder, Abdullah Ocalan, and the history and start of the PKK are warranted. Kurdish identity and ethnic separation in Turkey has caused much turmoil. There are different explanations as to

[65] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, 87.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

what makes up the Kurdish people, and different schools of thought have focused on how governments "often justify their policies or actions by using history."[69] The theories concerning the origins of the Kurdish people vary from the Mendes which was occupied by the Assyrians, ancient Sumeria, and even the ancient Turkic or Persian bloodlines.[70] This ambiguity explains why the Kurdish population has had such a difficult time establishing identity and cultural baselines for support. The many explanations and a dearth of unifying ethnic similarities explain, to some extent, why Kurdish movements in Turkey and places like Iraq usually end in bloodshed. The Kurds not only fight for existence, they also fight within among themselves because of identity and ethnic dilemmas. Regardless of their origins, the Kurds in Turkey wanted a Kurdish state to be established in southeast Turkey—and they were willing to go to war for it.[71]

Most of the Kurdish population lives in rural farming villages and districts. Poverty and arduous work with low pay are common, and most, with the exception of landowners, have had a difficult life and role in society. The modern history of Kurdish insurgency centers on Abdullah Ocalan, born in Sanliurfa, Turkey, in 1948 as the eldest of seven children.[72] Violence was his technique of choice at an early age, which helps explain some of his later methods. Revenge and violence were instilled early; as a case in point, a story claims that when Ocalan was jumped by a group of kids and came home bloody, his mother kicked him out and demanded he get revenge.[73] Ocalan has been quoted as proudly having "cracked the heads of many children" during his childhood.[74] Another revealing episode in his life concerns the marriage or sale, as believed by some, of his sister. Ocalan was unhappy that she was forced to marry a man from another village and wanted to change the long-standing tradition that treated woman like

---

[69] Niyazi Ekici, "Ethnic Terrorism and the Case of PKK: A Comparative Study" (master's thesis, Rutgers University, 2006), 29–30.

[70] Ibid., 29-30.

[71] Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 9.

[72] Ibid., 15.

[73] Ibid., 16.

[74] Ibid.

property.[75] This psychological background is useful in understanding who Ocalan was. If ending an insurgency is desired, understanding one's rival's perspective of what he is truly fighting for should be examined.

Since the Republic of Turkey's establishment in the early 1920s, harsh anti-Kurdish laws and doctrines have made it difficult for Kurdish people to make a living, or even obtain the basic rights of their Kurdish language and birth names. Kurdish activities and identities were stripped from the history books, and any sort of rebellion was met with severe and quick military action.[76] The Kurdish movement was suppressed until the military coup of 1960. This was considered the most liberal time since the formation of the republic, when basic freedoms like protesting, an independent press, and the establishment of social and ethnic groups set the stage for PKK.[77]

The freedoms that came after the 1960 military coup led to violent uprisings that endangered Turkey's reputation and creditability. In 1971, another military coup occurred—this time the military wanted to ensure that the constitution would quash the freedoms that several Kurdish movements were exploiting and which had resulted in violence, due to the state's reaction. Social and ethnic groups that had been given freedom and autonomy were completely shut down.[78] During this period, Ocalan enrolled in Ankara University to study political science to help answer the "socialism and Kurdishness" questions that had plagued him and his movement.[79] As a student, he participated in many protests and finally ended up in jail for protesting Turkey's killing of some Kurdish militants who had kidnapped three NATO technicians.[80] In prison, Ocalan shared many stories with other Kurds and realized that many other Kurdish

[75] Ibid., 16–17.

[76] Marcus, *Blood and Belief*, 18–19.

[77] Ibid., 19.

[78] Ibid., 22–23.

[79] Ibid., 23.

[80] Ibid.

groups were forming, with different agendas. He began to realize the political power he needed to make a true push for an independent Kurdish state.[81]

The insurgency stage was set—regardless of the decisions and actions made by Turkey, the Kurdish movement was destined to be uncontrollable because of the way Turkey had handled the situation since 1923. Turkey had crushed any form of political rights given to the Kurds and did not allow any identity or cultural freedoms—a typical recipe for state disaster.[82]

B. THE INSURGENCY

The government of Turkey was, without question, one of the main reasons the PKK and other insurgent groups were able to thrive. There were four coalition governments during 1975–1980, and none could provide the basic needs of the population or function properly as a government.[83] This contributed to many power struggles by Kurdish groups to bring the people under a unified strategy in response to the lack of government control; but groups like *Kawa* and the *Ozgurluk Yolu*, to name a few, lacked the organization and structure that Ocalan called for. Other groups used the Kurdish struggle as a false front to get other things on their agenda accomplished. None was able to appeal to the people, especially the twenty-year-olds who were ready to act for the cause.[84] It is important to note how vital charismatic leaders are in an insurgency. Mao argued this significant fact, stating that the leader of a movement must be able to mobilize the young people, because they will in turn lead the fight at the smaller unit level until the "last drop of their blood" is gone.[85] When a leader masters that psychological bond, it is very difficult to change his disciples' way of thinking after the fact—especially in a COIN environment.

---

[81] Ibid., 26–27.

[82] Ibid., 18-19.

[83] Marcus, *Blood and Belief*, 49.

[84] Ibid., 34–35.

[85] Mao, *Mao Tse-tung on Guerrilla Warfare*, 71.

Little to no autonomy was given to the Kurdish people by the government, and internal disputes among Kurdish groups and lack of equal opportunity led to the forming of the PKK. Aliza Marcus observes that many think the PKK captivated the poor and uneducated masses because of their unified belief in a lack of opportunity and representation; whereas Marcus argues that the early soldiers of the PKK were educated Kurds who had made a better life for themselves than the previous generation and were aiming to join the Turkish mainstream. It is very important to highlight that poor opportunities and living conditions did not outweigh the Kurdish identity and nationalism struggle.[86] This suggests another difficult COIN mission—how to change the minds of those who believe they are fighting for an identity.

Many Kurdish groups continued to organize and mobilize, but none was able to capture the momentum of the PKK, especially because of the effective leadership of Ocalan.[87] There were without question numerous ideals and styles that the different Kurdish groups were fighting for, ranging from identity struggles, to sought-after or perceived-as-occupied territory, to Mao-like ideals and warfare strategies. [88] But the PKK kept it simple. The problem, as defined by the PKK: Turkey's colonization with capitalistic trends in Kurdish regions. The solution: "armed struggle," blended with a socialist approach to counter the state's government and military.[89] The PKK, due mostly to Ocalan, were able to unite a large armed Kurdish movement with goals and ideology in a simple format with far-reaching implications. The government found itself confronted with an armed group with a honed-in focus and objectives and crosshairs centered sharply on Istanbul.

As the insurgency got out of control, extremists were fighting and killing people among themselves, which led to hundreds of murders in the late 1970s and by 1979 resulted in the murder of twenty people per day. The armed forces of Turkey had no choice but to impose martial law. In 1980, General Chief of Staff Kenan Evren

---

[86] Marcus, *Blood and Belief*, 37.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid., 38.

announced in a radio address that the military was taking over the country—all regions and government duties. Numerous politicians were arrested, insurgent groups were isolated, and many towns were locked down and cut off from external contact. The next three years resulted in thousands of Kurds and other extremists killed, captured, and tortured. This all contributed to the PKK's transformation into a strong paramilitary group in 1984, after the military returned power to democratic rule.[90] This was an enormous success for the insurgency, because it caused the government to overreact and restrict freedoms of the entire populace and to the most extreme, was an immense factor to the takeover of the government.

An important factor that led to some favorable conditions for the insurgency was urbanization during 1976–1980. Sayari and Hoffman argue that urbanization and terrorism do not necessarily have a direct cause-and-effect connection, but "social, economic, and political" urbanization problems did allow the PKK to spread influence and mobilize the urban poor; violence started in the countryside, but ended up delivering a major blow to cities like Istanbul, Izmir, and Ankara, resulting in many bombings and assassinations.[91]

In the late 1970s, Turkey had major squatter- and shantytowns called *gecekondus*, which proved to be a good breeding ground for social unrest. Different groups in these areas used extremist influence to get poor residents to help carry out violent acts, regardless of terrorist group ties or ideology.[92] In other words, the people of the *gecekondu*s were being used, because of their low status, to perpetrate violence on behalf of terrorist groups. The insurgents (the PKK especially) seized control of poor areas and were able to influence them without reference to the specific Kurdish cause, because the PKK, not the government, provided basic needs, including food, security, and utilities. Terrorist groups such as the PKK were able to keep government forces out by gaining popular support; *gecekondus* were considered "no-man's lands" that police and other

---

[90] Ibid., 50–51.

[91] Sabri Sayari and Bruce Hoffman, *Urbanization and Insurgency: The Turkish Case, 1976–1980* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1991), 1.

[92] Ibid., 5, 13.

Turkish government agencies refused to support or intervene in, for numerous reasons.[93] The insurgents were able to connect immigrants and the poor on a platform of unity and close-knit communal ties.[94]

Insurgents will always prey on the poor and displaced, because what other options do dispossessed persons truly have: stay poor and forgotten, or join a group that provides basic needs and hope? It is a big mistake for any government to ignore the have-nots of society, not only because of the moral duty to provide for all the people, but also because, from the COIN point of view, these areas are without question an insurgent breeding ground. The PKK exploited this government weakness.

C. STATE RESPONSE AND COIN

This section details how Turkey's military practiced COIN tactics on behalf of the state. Christopher Paul breaks down the insurgency into four phases using Aliza Marcus's data points in *Blood and Belief:* 1) the initial phase (1984–1986); 2) repression and resettlement (1987–1989); 3) insurgency growth (1990–1993); and 4) the triumph of the big stick (1994–1999).[95]

1. The Initial Phase (1984–1986)

The social dynamic in Turkey during this period was demanding for Kurds and non-Kurds alike. The 1982 Turkish constitution focused on Turkish nationalism, emphasizing language and identity while disregarding Kurdish issues and struggles, very much as in the early 1900s. The many rival political groups in support of the Kurds made it difficult for either the state or the PKK to gain support from the populace. The PKK had to play hardball and force their way into villages for support. During this time, the PKK were more feared then the military and police, and even fellow Kurdish citizens turned against them. It was a time that both sides called the "battle of propaganda," and

[93] Ibid., 18.

[94] Ibid., 17–18.

[95] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand* Fathers, 87–91.

the PKK was losing.[96] Turkish forces, especially the police, focused on winning over the population and were able to sway the public through propaganda that showed how brutal and violent the PKK was. The Turkish government was winning.

2. Phase Two (1987–1989)

The tide turned in the second phase: Turkey's military forces started to lose their grasp on the insurgency situation and created problems with their heavy-handed tactics. Turkey trained its soldiers to separate the insurgents from the populace so they could kill the right people, but, inevitably, translating this policy to the tactical level had mixed results; some villagers were forced out of their towns and, if they resisted, were usually killed. The PKK won this round of the propaganda war because most Kurdish villages did not have media outlets that showed state sponsorship in the successful COIN fight with the PKK, or stories that highlighted PKK violence and intimidation. The Turkish military forces lost popular support during this phase.[97]

3. Phase Three (1990–1993)

The insurgency continued to ride a wave of popularity during the third phase. The PKK coordinated mass movements within the Kurdish population that made Turkish forces overreact—a huge success for the insurgency. Besides goading the military, the PKK was able to provide basic day-to-day needs for the populace and control complete areas and villages without Turkish intervention. The hills and villages proved to be challenging for the Turkish forces, as expected in this guerilla-warfare-like environment. The COIN forces lost during this phase.[98]

4. The Fourth Phase (1994–1999)

From 1994 to 1999, the fourth and final phase, Turkish forces turned into an aggressive military machine. They were killing and arresting any PKK or suspected PKK members at a very fast pace and, at times, with complete disregard of the populace.

---

[96] Ibid., 87–88.

[97] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, 88–89.

[98] Ibid., 89–90.

Marcus details that a Turkish commander was killed in the city of Lice, so the military responded by blocking off the village and removing all external ties while going house to house. The result was over 100 civilians killed or wounded.[99] The military was far from perfect, but did have some very significant COIN practices: they cut off external support, hurt the PKK's command-and-control element, and improved their kinetic actions. Turkish forces started to remove external support institutions in Iraq by destroying PKK training centers and used military air and ground assets to kill members of the PKK. The COIN mission focused on destroying the support links that made the PKK successful: leadership, food and supplies, and external/internal support. The Turkish military captured Ocalan and eventually won the support of the populace after dismantling the PKK's functioning institutions.[100]

Paul argues that it is difficult to study the PKK case because of a lack of unbiased information and data. He further states that the PKK never really threatened the Turkish state.[101] Studying the dynamics of the insurgency and COIN responses by the military forces might prove otherwise. The battle with the PKK raged since the late 1970s. The numerous military coups and attempts in the past twenty years, coupled with economic woes, could have continued and brought Turkey down if military forces were not able to destroy the PKK. The Turkish military was battle tested for fifteen years of engaged combat operations and their COIN ups and downs provide some best-practice train and equip recommendations.

D. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Case study of the PKK yields some obvious answers and results: heavy-handed tactics from the government are frequently counterproductive; if basic needs are not provided to a people, then insurgents will fill the void; and whenever an ethnic group is repressed, violence and armed struggle shows its ugly head. But a closer analysis during

[99] Marcus, *Blood and Belief*, 221.

[100] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, 91–92.

[101] Ibid., 93.

the different phases, honing in on how the military trained and equipped its forces—the good and bad—provides some virtuous COIN practices for future conflicts and struggles.

1. Military and Police Forces Must Improve on Propaganda Tactics

As most experience has proven, insurgents do a much better job at propaganda. Mao, in *On Guerilla Warfare,* expresses that the propaganda officer is subordinate only to the battalion commander and has as much responsibility as the executive officer.[102] There is no COIN doctrine, foreign or domestic, that is able to counter the insurgent's power to sway the people by propaganda—the insurgents are the masters. The Turkish police and military forces were able to outwork the insurgents at first, or to some degree, preventing the PKK from winning the propaganda war.

2. As an Insurgency Increases, Proportional or Stronger Reactions in Military Force May Hinder Overall COIN Objectives

This point is tricky because Turkish forces were able to defeat the insurgency by using strong military forces—but they won because they did it correctly. At first, Turkish forces overreacted and angered most of the population. The major reason this was not catastrophic for Turkish forces was because the PKK were conducting operations too violently and losing public support.

3. Military Forces Must Work with Local Governing Institutions: Nation Building Is Part of the Mission, Whether the Military Likes It or Not

Turkish regional governors were given new powers and developed better partnerships among the police, military, and government institutions. Most militaries do not want to take on this mission, but it is a must.[103]

---

[102] Mao, *Mao Tse-tung on Guerrilla Warfare*, 13.

[103] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, 88–89.

4. Training and Equipping Military Forces Appropriately to Defeat an Insurgency Is Crucial for COIN Objectives

Fighter jets and heavy armored equipment was useless in the mountains and villages—and at times caused too much collateral damage, which shifted the populace towards the insurgents. A related problem is that Turkish soldiers, like most in COIN campaigns, did not like leaving their armed/secured bases at night to engage the enemy. The insurgents capitalized on this weakness and had free movement at night.[104] Maiah Jaskoski in *Military Politics and Democracy in the Andes,* confirms this possibly epidemic military problem in COIN operations. Her focus is on Ecuador, Peru, and Columbia, but applies to military actions regardless of region and culture.[105] COIN forces must have proper equipment and train suitably to counter insurgent progress.

5. COIN Forces Should Be Established in the Heart of Each City or Village to Be Among the Local People

Large, gated bases do not provide locals with the protection they need, and, sometimes even more important, allow insurgents to blend in with the people and have more opportunities for influence. Turkish forces adapted to their environment and trained and equipped their forces into "mobile strike forces" that lived and breathed in the villages and cities where the PKK once had free movement.[106] This was a huge tactical success that allowed Turkish military/police forces to be more aggressive and actually know whom to kill and whom to work or negotiate with—at the tactical level, where it should be.

6. Use Kinetic Forces When Needed—Full Force at the Right Target

COIN is a tough mission for any military, and at times, less force and more political and social action or reaction is needed. But one should never forget that sometimes the only way to remove bad people, and especially violent insurgents, is to kill them. One major reason for Turkey's success was that they focused on the leader. Once

---

[104] Ibid., 90–91.

[105] Jaskoski, *Military Politics*, 2.

[106] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, 91–92.

they removed Ocalan and released his hard grip on all aspects of operations, the movement crumbled. Turkish forces, by severing supply and communication lines internally (by means of embedded security teams in the villages), and externally (by cutting off Iraqi training centers), were able to use military forces the way they should be—against the insurgents, and not the people.[107]

By 1999, Turkish forces had adapted COIN tactics and practices that demoralized and weakened the PKK; they had some very challenging times subsequently and continued to be tested with PKK violent actions, but nonetheless their experience provides some good practices and lessons to consider in other insurgencies. The Turkish security forces enjoyed a COIN win, but as the government continues to negotiate with Ocalan, civil–military relations within Turkey will be a deciding factor in the success or failure of negotiations. Modern Turkey will be far from having complete peace with the Kurdish population and the PKK until they address Kurdish ethnic issues and stop oppressing this lost minority. A thorn in the side to some Turkish political and military leaders is the U.S. and NATO; both have an impact on past and present Turkish military actions. Further research on this topic is beyond the scope of this analysis, but could provide a better understanding of the motivations for Turkey's actions. Walter Posch states that most Turkish forces feel the U.S. and NATO failed to support their armed struggle and that they adapted and trained themselves regardless of dictates from Brussels (North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]).[108] This type of environment could create more tension with the Kurdish–Turkish struggle.

The true test will come if and when the Turkish military and national politics collide again and allow another large-scale insurgency that makes the government lose control. Turkey will need continued monetary and training support from NATO, and the U.S. to some extent, to continue to be a convincing world force. That aside, Turkey has proven that their military force is capable of handling internal insurgency disputes, which proves they are a credible world military force.

---

[107] Ibid., 91–93.

[108] Walter Posch, *Crisis in Turkey: Just Another Bump on the Road to Europe?* Occasional Paper no. 67 (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2007), 44–45.

IV. COLOMBIA AND THE FARC

The first two cases in this thesis dealt with deep-rooted insurgency factors: internal and external (Afghanistan) and ethnic collisions (Turkey). Colombia, the final case study, demonstrates how a nation dealt with large violent groups that represented the impoverished populace (or enjoyed a perception of representation) and colossal drug-trafficking actions that created chaos for the people and government. The *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP)—or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People's Army, better known as the FARC—is an insurgent group that at times had the entire nation under its hand of terror. Like most insurgents, the FARC caused much turmoil and violence, but the way the FARC operated was unusual to some—they strongly believed they were fighting for the poor.

The overwhelmed military forces of Colombia underestimated the power and social movement the FARC was able to achieve. After many hard lessons and through numerous factors, to be examined in detail, the military forces of Colombia were able to defeat the FARC—not completely, but in the sense of winning back their country and decreasing violent acts carried out by the FARC. The Colombian civil–military leadership revamped their state and military system, which resulted in a superb example of government-military adaptation during an insurgency, and overhauled train-and-equip policies within the military organization.[109] Exploration of Colombia's brutal history (which ultimately led to the formation of the FARC), the dynamics of the actual insurgency, and the COIN efforts of Colombia's government and military forces will again illustrate how military adaptation can be successful when coupled with proper train-and-equip best practices.

[109] See Thomas Marks, *Colombian Army Adaptation to FARC Insurgency*, for further pre-2002 analysis. Marks believed the military received no political or government interaction to battle the insurgency; this was true until Uribe took office after Marks work was published and is further explored by the author.

A. HISTORY

Like most nations, Columbia's current events have been shaped by historical actions that seem to have come from nowhere and may surprise some as to why they ever happened. Colombia has endured political and social hardships for 100 years, and examining this violent past is needed before exploring the insurgency conflict with the FARC. There is no question that the FARC is an insurgent guerilla organization, but the events leading up to the formation of the FARC explain its motives and reasoning.

The instability of Colombia during the 19th century contributed to a strong rivalry between liberals and conservatives. Most nations throughout the world have some sort of tension between the left and right political parties, but Colombia's experience with these two major political factions was disastrous—for the state and people. Numerous armed conflicts led up to the "War of a Thousand Days" in the late 1800s to 1902.[110] Roughly 100,000 liberals and conservatives lost their lives, and the people and government of Colombia were in major hysteria. Lack of resources—human and capital—combined with insufficient government funds, led to the downfall of the liberal party and created an environment for conservatives to take advantage.[111] Ruling with an iron fist, the Colombian government, now controlled by the conservative party, nominated General Rafael Reyes as president, a leader who had much experience in the thousand-day conflict and was picked to lead Colombia into a better 20th century. The minority party had some role in the government after a few years and Colombia started to look like a democratic nation; political assemblies started to organize and structure how candidates could be elected for political office. Property ownership and literacy requirements excluded much of the population from this political process. This disenfranchisement was a guaranteed recipe for disaster and led to religious influence unwanted by a large part of the population, unregulated exploitation of child and peasant laborers, and tremendous tensions between haves and have-nots.[112] The country started to progress by implementing government institutions and was able to generate more revenue, but the

[110] Geoff Leslie Simons, *Colombia: A Brutal History* (London: Saqi, 2004), 35.

[111] Ibid., 35–36.

[112] Ibid., 36–37.

disparity between the rich and poor and the same liberal–conservative fray would come to haunt Colombia.

The government was able to get the U.S. to contribute more capital towards their infrastructure and start developing Colombia as a major state actor in the region. This continued through the early 1900s and is believed by some to have started the dependency of Colombia to the U.S. More importantly, U.S. influence and political control became more prevalent in Colombia. As a case in point, during World War II, Colombia at first stayed neutral and was at times even defiant on choosing a side, but quickly found itself in border and territory disputes with Venezuela and Peru and was rewarded by a generous $8,000,000 "lend-lease aid" package after agreeing to support the U.S.[113]

None of the political moves that Colombia accomplished during the early 1900s to the late 1940s addressed the underlying conflicts between the different social classes and political parties. In 1946, workers started to protest and mobilize because of unfair wages and government actions. As the groups started growing and spreading, Colombia responded with excessive security force that resulted in an estimated 14,000 protestors killed during this period. There were some nonviolent movements in the major cities, but for the most part, violent uprisings spread throughout the countryside and thousands of workers met with death squads sent by the conservative government to set an example. The protestors demolished and destroyed anything in sight, regardless of the social composition of the city, and the response of the government was inhumane, to say the least. People were brutally murdered and the security forces hired armed thugs who put trophies consisting of mutilated bodies and body parts like tongues and testicles on display in the villages. Besides this ruthless killing, rape and torture were common among the security forces.[114] Simply put, it was appalling how the Colombian forces responded to protests and opposition, and cruelty was how they treated their citizens.

[113] Simons, *Colombia*, 36–38.

[114] Ibid., 40–41.

This period of Colombian history was known as *La Violencia*, the era of violence, and resulted in over 200,000 people losing their lives. Death squads, torture, and unabated violence ravaged the nation, and neither the conservatives nor liberals could escape the reality that both parties were responsible. Democracy and political parties failed. Communist ideals and support spread throughout the country; in particular, the poor rural areas accepted and supported new guerilla fighters from local regions. Even with the creation of the National Front, which was intended to end the violence and unite the liberal and conservative parties, communism and Marxist ideals appealed to many and ignited insurgent groups against the state.[115]

Colombia excluded the poor from a voice in their government, used sadistic, heavy-handed tactics to end opposition and protests, and was unable to show the people that their political system worked. The door opened for communist ideals and ways to spread, and the FARC was ready to show a vulnerable population that revolution was the answer to their prayers.

B. INSURGENCY

It is too simplistic to state that the FARC was established because of new Marxist and communist ideals—in fact some argue that these same principles had deep roots already embedded among the people. James Brittain in *Revolutionary Social Change in Colombia* argues that communist ideas started in the early 1900s, when peasants mobilized with communist groups in the central mountain areas. Linkages between the different groups strengthened the argument that "rural inroads" made this mobilization possible even before the formation of the PCC (*Partido Communista Colombiano*—the Colombian Communist Party), which can explain the composition of the PCC: peasants made up 40% of the total communist group by 1958.[116] This was an important element of the insurgency—they were mostly poor, already had ideals and teachings from earlier

[115] Simons, *Colombia*, 41–42.

[116] James J. Brittain, *Revolutionary Social Change in Colombia: The Origin and Direction of the FARC-EP* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), 3–4.

generations, and had violent methods and massive payback mentalities from the civil war. These factors were key in the formation of the FARC.

The National Front was designed to eliminate the liberal–conservative division that had led to so much bloodshed, but during this period (the 1950s to early 1960s), it was also systematically eliminating the voice of the PCC, who had started to connect rural and urban workers in a threat to the state.[117] Furthermore, urban capitalists monopolized land rights and ownership, which hit the middle and low-level farmer's pocketbook.[118] These sometimes forgotten causes explain the events leading up to the FARC and provide warning for other nations: ensure that capitalistic gains do not hurt large minority groups, especially the poor, who will either give their support or join the alternative.

The FARC was established on May 27, 1964, and had an operating ideology and a springboard for action: Marxist communist ideals that claimed to represent the forgotten poor against the government of Colombia. The FARC's early leaders and founders were Luis Morantes (aka Jacobo Arenas) and Manual Marulundo Valez (aka Tirofijo).[119] The FARC moved quickly and established control of an area in the Marquetalia region of Tolima. The group insisted that the government allow them to control, operate, and provide security for local rural farmers without government intervention. These areas, with the encouragement of the PCC and the FARC, started to influence farmers and small landowners to share land and create a self-sustaining infrastructure that would allow autonomy from the government and, most worrisome to the state, produce "self-defense groups."[120] This movement directly threatened the credibility and power of the state, and especially their security forces. With much U.S. support, and roughly $17,000,000, along with a third of Colombian forces, the government attempted to remove the groups and

---

[117] Brittain, *Revolutionary Social Change*, 6.

[118] Ibid., 7.

[119] Stanford University, "Mapping Militant Organizations," http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/.

[120] Brittain, *Revolutionary Social Change*, 8–9.

take back Marquetalia.[121] Most of the FARC was defeated, but senior leadership escaped and the operation was not considered a total victory, since some defense groups stayed in power and controlled small areas in the region.[122] The group now had their legitimacy—they had brought their struggles to the world stage and forced the Colombian government to spend millions and use thousands of troops without defeating them.

The FARC continued to build momentum and support in the late 1970s and 1980s, with only a few attacks and minor incidents with the government (as compared to the 1990s), since they remained mostly in rural areas. At one point, they even came to a peace agreement with the government of Colombia, known as the *Union Patriotica* (UP), which turned the organization into more of a political movement vice a guerilla group. This ended quickly with the assassinations of many of their political figures, which made the group turn their center of attention back to violent measures and focus on urban targets as well. They started targeting all Colombian military and government officials, along with any American citizens or businesses. Their methods included murder, torture, intimidation, bombings, and extortions against anyone who opposed them, including the innocent. The group grew to 18,000 members and major attacks increased throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.[123] The FARC formed because of weak government institutions and, to their credit, tried political methods under the formation of the UP, but realized that their voice and representation would only be heard through violent acts.

Drug trafficking and brutal, indiscriminate killings increased, and the FARC was one of the major reasons for this problem. Paramilitaries, weak Colombian security forces, and numerous other terrorist or drug-trafficking cells made Colombia a bistro of terror. Citizens were gunned down or forced to evacuate cities, and there were even accusations of Colombian military forces working with paramilitaries to kill and silence the people. In other words, Colombia was a complete disaster with numerous players: drug traffickers, paramilitaries, Colombian security forces, and the FARC, among others,

---

[121] Brittain, *Revolutionary Social Change*, 11–13.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Stanford University, "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army | Mapping Militant Organizations," last modified August 13, 2012, http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/89.

all working against stability. Over 300 guerilla cells moved into Bogota's poor areas and spread influence and gained intelligence—they eventually controlled almost 40 per cent of these areas. To assert control, they operated like a gang, killing and intimidating whoever worked with security forces and coercing individuals to join their movement.[124] As in Turkey, the government allowed the poor areas to be controlled by the wrong groups, and even more crucially, lacked the security forces needed to maintain order. It was complete chaos, and the people of Colombia ultimately paid the price, forced to choose between terrorist groups, paramilitaries, or corrupt security forces for their basic security requirements.

A successful move by the FARC, and an instructive lesson on what not to do, was to convince the government to give up territory during negotiations. Due to the warlike climate in Colombia and weak state institutions, the government opted to try something different. President Andres Pastrana bargained with the FARC for a ceasefire and gave up territory the size of Switzerland. The FARC thus not only had government-granted land, they now had a staging and training area for more drug-trafficking operations and guerilla fighters. The FARC continued their attacks and eventually lost the territory, but nonetheless had showed the population once again that they were a creditable, legitimate group that could take down the government.[125]

Sometimes forgotten during insurgencies is that excessive means against insurgents and the regular population by COIN forces results in increased violence. Saying that Colombian forces were guilty of this method would be an understatement. Colombian forces were not legally responsible for human-rights violations and were immune from prosecution. Furthermore, as noted by Jaskoski, the military forces only accepted policing and narcotics missions to receive more funding for COIN missions, especially better equipment like armed helicopters and small, fast boats for river operations.[126] These COIN expenditures were misguided, because the military did not

---

[124] Simons, *Colombia*, 179–181.

[125] Public Broadcasting Service, "'Biblioburro' in Context: Columbia in Conflict: Government Response | Biblioburro: The Donkey Library," *POV*, July 19, 2011, http://www.pbs.org/pov/biblioburro/photo_gallerybackground.php?photo=4#.Uz8jQBB7SnQ.

[126] Jaskoski, *Military Politics*, 185–188.

focus on local areas that supported the FARC and drug trade. This strengthened the insurgency, which were able to continue operating in areas where the security forces did not care to go.

Because of weak government institutions, the FARC was able to prey on rural communities and take away the choice they should have had—that is, to join and support the insurgency or work with the government. The latter was not even an option, since the security forces and paramilitaries were corrupt and at times just as violent as the FARC. Giving the FARC legitimate territory in which to act autonomously, also showed the people that they were in a sense winning, because the government had been made to negotiate. One could see, with the country in chaos, that the people were not sure who was winning—the drug dealers, the paramilitaries, the FARC, or the government. Regardless of these choices, the FARC combined rural and urban groups to mobilize against the government, and the FARC was winning.

C. COIN AND MILITARY ADAPTATION

Colombian security forces needed a complete overhaul, and by and large, government functioning needed to improve as well; the way this is usually accomplished is by a charismatic leader at the top, usually the president, and senior military officials who have the same agenda and goal as their civilian leadership. This was not present in the Pastrana (1998–2002) administration and truly diminished any momentum that the military was able to build. The soldiers were being tasked to crush the insurgency while the administration was negotiating with their opponents at the same time. The soldiers were forced to accept policies that damaged the army's ability and strategic plans to carry out what was needed to destroy the FARC and handle other security disputes.[127, 128]

President Alvaro Uribe's (2002–2010) policy and strategy were different; he worked with the military understanding that "military reform was central" for success, and even though it started under the Pastrana era, it was not fully utilized until the

[127] Marston and Malkasian, *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, 209–211.

[128] See Marks, *Colombian Army Adaptation*. Author for this work also argues that there was no guidance to the military.

civilian leadership managed their security forces correctly. The military quickly sprang to action, accepting that their major failures in the 1980s and 1990s were due to lack of professionalism—specifically, the lack of a major platform to train and equip best practices. The military-education system needed to be revamped, especially in the NCO core and in training more volunteers vice large conscript forces.[129] Obviously, all military forces conduct some sort of training program, regardless of size or funding; the key is to perform this function correctly and appropriately. Sending eighteen-year-olds into villages during an insurgency without proper training usually yields not-so-desirable results.

The training role of the military forces started to improve, and now they needed an answer to the "equip" failures of their forces. As expected, funding was the main contributor to this part of the mission. Monetary allowances cannot win wars, but does provide the hardware that forces need to fight; the challenging part is being able to put the correct equipment in the hands of a properly trained force.

"Plan Colombia," with its $1.3 billion pledge from the U.S., was a large part of the reason Colombian forces were able to fill their equip shortages.[130] The objectives focused on counter-drug issues and the instability caused by paramilitaries and the FARC.[131] Even though the U.S. allocated the money for mostly counter-narcotic (CN) missions, the Colombian forces knew that counterterrorism (CT) missions, going directly after the FARC and others, would allow the forces to take back lost areas and influence more of the population. Over 400 military and civilian assets under the military-assistance mission (U.S. Military Group [MILGP]) with U.S. state-department support helped train Colombian forces to battle their insurgency. The U.S. felt that if the Colombian forces triumphed in the narcotics fray, then violence and terrorist groups would lose funding and die. Colombian forces did not agree with this logic, but after 9/11, the CN and CT barriers were blurred and sort of lumped into one mission.

---

[129] Marston and Malkasian, *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, 211–212.

[130] Max G. Manwaring, *U.S. Security Policy in the Western Hemisphere: Why Colombia, Why Now, and What Is To Be Done?* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2001), 1.

[131] Ibid.

Regardless, the result was more funding, and 145,000 men with 20,000 volunteer counter-guerilla forces in mobile, local units were able to benefit from the surge due to improved professional training and newly funded equipment.[132]

The COIN objectives could now be realistic and have the restraint element that comes from proper training. New combat equipment with technology purchases of helicopters and small boats could be used correctly. Colombian forces understood that the "domination of local areas was the lynchpin" for success during their COIN efforts.[133] The military used conscripts to patrol and secure large areas, while the volunteer, more professional units would strike local internal targets and manage the regular core soldiers.[134] The objectives could be truly successful only because the policy given by the civilian leadership supported the same goal. President Uribe, with support from the highly decorated General Carlos Ospina, established a national plan that focused solely on the population. Coordination from the police and army was improved and gave both forces better directives, with new laws that empowered the security forces; but without question, the plan was to protect the citizens of Colombia. "The people" and the "population" were repeated over and over throughout the document, which was the guiding framework for speeches given by all military and civilian leaders.[135] Colombian forces now had established appropriate train-and-equip best practices with a unified agenda from civilian and military leadership.

Insurgencies drain resources—human and capital. Colombian forces experienced this firsthand throughout their 50-year battle with the FARC and other paramilitary and insurgent groups. Funding was running out from Plan Colombia when the administration imposed a one-time war tax that allowed $670 million dollars to be used for the *Plan de Choque* during 2002–2006.[136] The money was designed to mobilize and support smaller local units. It transferred conscript slots to much more costly (roughly ten times more

[132] Marston and Malkasian, *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, 212–213.

[133] Ibid., 214.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid., 216–217.

[136] Ibid., 219.

expensive) volunteer positions at the rate of 10,000 per year. Local forces were now established, and the military, with help from the government, used an old 1940 law that allowed drafted soldiers to serve in their hometowns.[137] They were known as "home guards" or *soldadosde mi* pueblo in Spanish; this was a great example of proper train-and-equip procedures. The forces were composed of forty-man units (approximately) in over 600 locations. The teams were led by professional officers and senior NCOs who were not volunteers. This provided key intelligence for the security forces and improved coordinated joint efforts with local police and the army.[138] Colombian forces focused on organizing, training, equipping, and understanding local small-town dynamics, which greatly improved security and overall government legitimacy throughout the country. The people now had a creditable choice and a different option from just the FARC—a stable, reliable state.

D. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Colombia offers an extraordinary example of military adaptation through military–civil relations. It was not easy, and at times it seemed the government was going to completely lose control and legitimacy. Funding and proper train-and-equip procedures turned the tide on the insurgency and made the FARC scramble and overreact violently to exist. Studying their methods closely provides some key lessons for future conflicts.

1. Civil–military Relations Need Coordinated Leadership throughout the Insurgency

This might sound like an obvious lesson, but as Pastrana showed, if the military and civilian leadership are not on the same page of music, the result is much worse than horrid sounds. Leadership is key and must come from the president or highest civilian leader of a nation, with the senior military leaders working together to match policy with strategy. Uribe and Ospina were able to work together and lead their forces to success. Institutionalizing and allowing accountability measures were a must between these two

[137] Marston and Malkasian, *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, 219.

[138] Ibid., 219–220.

entities, because the goal was not only to kill insurgents, but to win over the people.[139] The top leadership must not lose sight on the population, as Uribe and his senior military officers' success illustrates.

2. Policy from Civilian Leadership Must Focus on the Population

Many times the focus on killing and battling insurgents trumps the main reason for COIN efforts, that is the populace—and even civilian supporters and active participants should be given the opportunity and ability to work with their state. Strong leadership in civil-military relations during insurgencies is needed.

3. Governments Should Not Negotiate or Give Up Territory to Insurgents

This might seem to some as a possible peace measure that could end violence with the insurgents, but as the Colombian case proved, it did not end the insurgency and in fact strengthened its actions by giving the FARC legitimacy and territory to train forces in. It was also a perceived weakness of the government, since they had to negotiate.

4. COIN Conflicts Are Extremely Expensive—Use Funds Accordingly

This success was mostly possible because of Plan Colombia and the government tax efforts to increase security forces. Not all nations are afforded this luxury, but in the case of Colombia, the funds were used correctly. The focus was to spend more revenue on professional training for all the security forces and select and train volunteer soldiers at a more professional level. The equipping mission was important, but more important was training in the Colombian case, because the military already had large quantities of equipment and material resources.

5. Professional Training and Schools for Officers and NCOs Are a Must

Most nations have a difficult time with this mission. Unlike the U.S., like Colombia did and others continue to face challenges in their ability or resources to

[139] Marston and Malkasian, *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, 228.

properly train security forces. The human-rights violations were mostly caused by this problem, as improperly trained soldiers were thrown into small communities and simply ordered to fight. Escalation of force measures was introduced and better overall training pipelines for security forces were used. The lesson: employ professional forces to lead and manage draftees.

6. A Small Local Unit Embedded within the Population is Crucial to Defeating an Insurgency

The most important element in COIN, after training and equipping a force, is this strategy. Too many times, COIN forces enjoy the comforts that big bases and guarded compounds provide. But what happens when security forces go back to their bases? The insurgents move back in and are able to operate freely. Colombian military–civil leadership came up with a brilliant plan—use professional soldiers to work with local draftees and keep them in their villages or small towns. These small units were extremely successful, providing much intelligence and allowing better coordination with local police forces.[140]

7. The Government Cannot Forget Poor and Rural Areas, Because They Are, and Always Will Be, an Insurgency Breeding Ground

Small units were able to work in the rural areas and show the poor that they were not forgotten, and the government, through its newly trained and equipped security forces, was able to push out insurgents and maintain order in the villages.

Colombian security forces were able to achieve success because they had proper COIN objectives, mixed with a strong working relationship between civilian and military leadership. Most of the success can be attributed to top-down adaptation among senior civil–military leadership. That connection, coupled with funding increases, promoted a more unified effort that focused on the appropriate training and equipping of forces. The history of Colombia highlights the importance for all nations of truly understanding and examining what sets off deep-rooted problems that carry over from older generations. These problems usually come from the forgotten, poor classes of society. This research

[140] Marston and Malkasian, *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, 229.

does not examine external factors that supported the insurgency. More research and data points could provide a better understanding on how the FARC was able to use the drug-trafficking trade with neighbors and how that affected the insurgency. Meanwhile, this case study highlights the importance of acknowledging past mistakes and ensuring that military and civilian leadership work in coordination to guide the operations undertaken to defeat an insurgency.

V. CONCLUSION

> Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.[141]
>
> —Aristotle

This thesis addresses the basic question of how to train and equip forces to counter an insurgency and why train-and-equip matters in a COIN environment. As the three case studies demonstrate, COIN is a very challenging and dynamic mission that requires much preparation and flexibility to produce positive results. These results will always vary. Regardless of region or history, insurgencies are lengthy conflicts that test the will of military forces and insurgents alike. As Aristotle points out, training is hard work in the quest to do the right thing, but the practices of most militaries result in repetitive failure, regardless of good intentions. The excellence that Aristotle describes has to come from within a COIN effort, from a focus on the population coupled with a military that is building and training a self-sustaining force by realistic means.

Why is this mission so difficult? To tackle this question, this thesis made reference to the old-school insurgent theorists Taber and Mao for a better understanding of the insurgent mindset. History has proven time and time again that battles are often fought without truly understanding what the other belligerents are fighting for. Insight from scholarly research by Jaskoski and Russell sets the stage for questions such as whether a given military is over tasked during COIN missions. Is it driven by monetary compensation, and is adaptation a crucial element in operational success? With these strong lines of inquiry, this thesis also attempted to show that regardless of the causes of an insurgency, once it is active, train-and-equip best practices are effective in lowering insurgent activity.[142]

---

[141] Goodreads, Inc., "Aristotle Quotes (Author of Politics) (page 3 of 13)," http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/2192.Aristotle?page=3.

[142] Thomas Johnson, "Taber & Mao," class lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, January 13, 2014.

The following hypotheses from this thesis emphasized the importance of train-and-equip efforts. First, regardless of culture or geography, nations do not focus on train-and-equip policies to fight insurgencies; instead, a military focuses on large, conventional military forces, with monetary backing. Second, the intensity of an insurgency depends on what cultural differences sparked the fight and whether the host nation has outside forces supporting COIN efforts. Third, when a COIN mission focuses on the process of training and equipping (more so in the training mission), whether by accident or plan, the insurgency decreases—regardless of any increase in monetary expenditures to forces.

A. FINDINGS

One could argue that all militaries, in one form or another, train and equip their forces to conduct operations. That is true—but this thesis argues that the focus must not be on kinetic means primarily, but more on establishing a local force that can carry out the mission, either by the security forces or with a more desirable effort from local participation. Table 1 is a graphic representation from the three case studies highlighting their similarities regardless of reason for the insurgency. This chart would vary throughout the insurgency due to when the nation actually adapted or implemented the policies, but nonetheless it captures the similarities between the three nations, and confirms they achieved success when they focused on train and equip best practices.

Case Study	Local Teams	Professional Military	Policing Priority	Focused on Training	Type of Insurgency
Afghanistan	X	X	X	X	External
Turkey	X	X	X	X	Ethnic
Colombia	X	X	X	X	Social

Table 1. Train and Equip Friction Points.[143]

The major findings from this thesis are,

1. **Form local, small teams.** As all three case studies proved, this is a crucial part of the training mission. In Afghanistan, it was much easier for a small team of three to five service members to travel to Afghan locations and

[143] Chart developed from author to depict the similarities of the three case studies regardless of cause of insurgency. It also strengthens the train and equip mission from all three case studies.

train forces at their compounds.[144] In Colombia, the security forces were able to create local, small units with professional officers that worked with local conscripts to regain support from the populace and push the insurgents out.[145] In Turkey, the "mobile striker units" gained ground by living in the heart of the major cities.[146] The people must see the COIN efforts in their villages, and the insurgents lose ground and traction when forces leave their gated and secure compounds to actually perform COIN.

2. **Focus on the people.** All three cases highlighted the importance of not forgetting the poor and displaced. The people are the prize. Insurgents and COIN forces will always push and pull objectives to win over the populace. All operations in any insurgency must have the populace in mind, and at times, more risk and restraint must be accepted to achieve this success.[147]

3. **Use a professional military.** In the Afghan case, ISAF was a capable force led by mostly U.S. forces. Those forces were professionally trained and equipped to conduct kinetic missions, but as the author stressed, adaptation was crucial for success. As for Turkey, and especially Colombia, once the training aspect was professionalized, the security forces were able to gain momentum because they had the proper training and equipment that contributed to better success.

4. **Make policing a priority.** Forces are needed to conduct policing missions. Once local units are established, a professional police force is needed to keep out insurgents and protect the population. All three cases examined made this a priority at different times, but as highlighted by each chapter, successful gains were achieved once it was realized. This is usually a late focus by COIN forces or a secondary priority that receives little capital in terms of finances or qualified personnel. The police live and breathe with the people and must be able to instill trust and keep out insurgents.

Other findings by examination of the three proposed hypotheses, to challenge some preconceived notions that some, including the author, had about insurgencies are as follows:

---

[144] Small teams provide quick and easy logistics to train forces; too many other teams would make the Afghans travel to them, which took away from the actual training time.

[145] Marston and Malkasian, *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, 218–220.

[146] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, 91–92.

[147] Thomas Johnson, "Taber & Mao," class lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, January 22, 2014.

1. Hypothesis 1: A Large Force with a Substantial Budget Is Key

Without question, militaries need large forces with a supporting budget to conduct operations. The weakness in relying on this precept comes from the undisputed facts. The Soviets had a large conventional force that out-equipped the Afghans and exceeded their technology by centuries. The U.S. committed over 60,000 U.S. troops by 2011 and invested billions, which turned to a trillion, towards the mission in Afghanistan.[148] And Plan Colombia's $1.3 billion went to good use in terms of equipping their military forces.[149] Nevertheless, the insurgencies continued and were not defeated. Money and heavily equipped forces do very little to insurgencies in terms of winning over the populace.

2. Hypothesis 2: Cultural Differences and External Factors Matter

The three case studies had divergent causes. Afghanistan is the most diverse country, with many tribal and ethnic differences, but its insurgency came from deep-rooted, unresolved foreign intervention that created many conflicts over the past thirty years. Colombia's insurgency had some aspects of cultural differences, but was more a struggle between social classes. The Turkish insurgency involved ethnic differences between Kurds and Turks.[150] The author contends that all three insurgencies continued regardless of culture differences and external support. That is not to say that culture and external support do not affect insurgencies, but they are not as important as the train-and-equip mission. Seth Jones argues that external support to insurgencies studied over the past 50 years yielded a 50% success rate over time, whereas those with no external support won only 17% of the time. External factors can at times tip the balance of operations, but, as Jones continues, they are not the deciding factor in victory, because these players do not reside or live in the area they are fighting in.[151] Cutting off external

---

[148] Amy Belasco, *Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001–FY2012: Cost and Other Potential Issues*, CRS Report R40682 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, July 2, 2009), 12.

[149] Manwaring, *U.S. Security Policy*, 1.

[150] The author's opinion from analysis for all three cases.

[151] Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 21–24.

support to insurgencies is extremely helpful, as Turkey did in Iraq, but it is not the deciding factor in insurgent conflict.

3. Hypothesis 3: Focus on Train-and-equip Objectives, Especially Training, Will Decrease Insurgency Activities

Not perfect, but the best hypotheses of the three. The research from this thesis showed that there was very little data on the equipping end as being a major contributor to success or decrease in insurgent activity. Afghanistan in the past twelve years has increased its security forces to over 300,000 troops trained by ISAF, including army and police, added ample weapons and body armor to their forces, and even upgraded to armored security vehicles in some regions.[152] Continued green-on-blue attacks (Afghan security forces turning on trainers) and ISAF's reduction in forces by 2014 will test the training of these forces, who are now heavily equipped. Turkey has a force of over 400,000 soldiers and is equipped with several divisions and battalions of armored vehicles and air assets.[153] Colombia now has over 270,000 soldiers, heavy mobile brigades, and scores of heavy equipment assets and machine guns.[154] Afghanistan, Turkey, and Colombia's military equipment is unmatched by their insurgent enemies; more research could track the progression of those increases as they relate to their insurgencies. Without question, security forces need funding to purchase equipment to fight insurgents. But as history has proven, technology can only do so much in an irregular conflict. This thesis argues that the countries studied had real success only when training-and-equipping objectives focused on local objectives, the people, and relied more on professional training of local forces.

---

[152] Jane's Information Group, "World Armies: Afghanistan," https://janes.ihs.com.libproxy.nps.edu/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1319169&Pubabbrev=JWAR.

[153] Jane's Information Group, "World Armies: Turkey," https://janes.ihs.com.libproxy.nps.edu/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1319320&Pubabbrev=JWAR.

[154] Jane's Information Group, "Colombia: Armed Forces," https://janes.ihs.com.libproxy.nps.edu/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1304599&Pubabbrev=SAM.

B. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Examining how countries train and equip forces to battle an insurgency, through the examples of Afghanistan, Turkey, and Colombia, has produced some implications for future COIN strategies and objectives. These findings and the major points, which focused on local, mobile forces, the populace, a professional military, and concentration on policing, contribute to the major implications of this research.

First, the goal in a COIN environment should be to establish a self-sustaining force. The findings from this research demonstrate the challenges that all three countries had when dealing with their insurgencies. Funding, proper equipment, and even allied support is needed, but cannot replace a training mission that will create a force to continue the fight once supplemental funding and support decreases. Even more important, a self-sustaining force can prevent other insurgencies and contain current conflicts. The past ninety insurgencies lasted an average of fourteen years.[155] What that means is that insurgencies will usually outlast popular support (by those for or against the conflict), funding requirements, and physical support in terms of boots on the ground. All three countries examined had U.S. involvement in policy and state support, but mostly received substantial financial support. The billions of aid that the U.S. has allocated for insurgencies will unquestionably decline as the 21st century continues. Whether created directly from outside support, as in the role of the U.S. in Afghanistan, or from institutions and resources found within national borders, the findings in this research affirm the importance of a self-sustaining force.

Finally, military adaptation and innovation must be encouraged and examined at all levels. Insurgencies are so irregular that strategies and training objectives from WWII are unlikely to be the correct starting point—even at the beginning of a conflict. As the case studies showed, a large number of offensive tools, in the form of equipment and forces, sometimes make things worse. Beyond the scope of this thesis was how politics and state decisions shape the ability of war fighters to accomplish their mission. Most experts would agree that the Iraqi conflict in 2003 affected the mission in Afghanistan,

[155] Seth Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 11.

due to resource management and support from the home front. The same types of issues most likely affected Turkey and Colombia as well. The strategies devised by civilian leaders, or senior military leaders, depending on the country, must not constrain the forces on the ground from changing tactics while still supporting objectives. The Afghan case study showed how innovation and adaptation increased success and provided the only real way the mission could be completed. The objective stayed the same—to train Afghans—but the "how" was massaged to yield better results, from the bottom up. The Colombian case study showed how top-down reform improved military performance during the insurgency. As for Turkey, it too experienced adaptation and innovation by changing its kinetic methods to counter the PKK. Whether in peacetime or combat, adaptation and innovation must be promoted at all levels and at all times. Some argue that changes won't happen if a force is winning, or thinks it is winning, and will only occur when failure is shown on the battlefield. Russell argues that in peacetime, changes usually come from senior civilian and military leaders; in wartime, the military will continue to reach objectives by adaptation and innovation in real time and "produce outputs relevant to their environment."[156] The author agrees with this assessment and moreover has lived it.

It is important to understand why a given insurgency has erupted. This thesis sought to define what actions work best when an insurgency is already present. The train-and-equip mission is usually an afterthought, once military forces have killed, or think they have killed, most of the insurgents. Proper military and civilian partnership can guide strategies that meet the objective of ending the insurgency. Until world militaries truly focus on winning insurgency conflicts by training and equipping forces at the local level, there will be continued failures and many lives lost on all sides. Insurgencies will never go away; but steadfast train-and-equip best practices can give security forces the means to fight insurgents and create a self-sustaining force that can improve security conditions for the civilian population.

[156] Russell, *Innovation, Transformation, and War*, 31, 211.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF REFERENCES

Barfield, Thomas. *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Belasco, Amy. *Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001–FY2012: Cost and Other Potential Issues*. CRS Report R40682. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, July 2, 2009.

Brittain, James J. *Revolutionary Social Change in Colombia: The Origin and Direction of the FARC-EP*. London: Pluto Press, 2010.

Collier, David. "The Comparative Method." In *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* II, edited by Ada W. Finifter, 105–119. Washington, DC: American Political Science Association, 1993.

Ekici, Niyazi. "Ethnic Terrorism and the Case of PKK: A Comparative Study." Master's thesis, Rutgers University, 2006.

Glatzer, Bernt. "War and Boundaries in Afghanistan: Significance and Relativity of Local and Social Boundaries." *Die Weld Des Islams* 41, no. 3 (November, 2001): 379–399.

Gurman, Hannah, ed. *Hearts and Minds: A People's History of Counterinsurgency*. New York: New Press, 2013.

Jane's Information Group. "Colombia: Armed Forces," accessed May 04, 2014, https://janes.ihs.com.libproxy.nps.edu/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1304599&Pubabbrev=SAM.

———. "World Armies: Afghanistan," accessed May 04, 2014, https://janes.ihs.com.libproxy.nps.edu/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1319169&Pubabbrev=JWAR.

———. "World Armies: Turkey," accessed May 04, 2014, https://janes.ihs.com.libproxy.nps.edu/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1319320&Pubabbrev=JWAR.

Jaskoski, Maiah. *Military Politics & Democracy in the Andes*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013.

Jones, Seth G. *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2008.

Kahl, Colin H. "COIN of the Realm: Is There a Future for Counterinsurgency?" *Foreign Affairs* 86, no.6 (November–December, 2007): 169–176. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20032516.

Khan, Riaz Mohammad. *Afghanistan and Pakistan: Conflict, Extremism, and Resistance to Modernity*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

Long, Austin. *On "Other War" Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2006.

Manwaring, Max G. *U.S. Security Policy in the Western Hemisphere: Why Colombia, Why Now, and What Is To Be Done?* Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2001.

Mao, Tse-tung. *Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication (FMFRP) 12-18: Mao Tse-tung on Guerrilla Warfare*. Translated by Samuel B. Griffith. Washington, DC: Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, 1989.

Marcus, Aliza. *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*. New York: New York University Press, 2008.

Marks, Thomas A. *Colombian Army Adaptation to FARC Insurgency*. Carlisle, PA: U.S. Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, 2002.

Marston, Daniel, and Carter Malkasian, eds. *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*. Oxford: Osprey, 2008.

McMaster, H. R. "The Pipe Dream of Easy War." *New York Times*, July 20, 2013.

Paul, Christopher, Clarke, Colin P., and Beth Grill. *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2010.

Petraeus, David and James Amos. *Field Manual (FM) 3-24: Counterinsurgency*. Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006.

Posch, Walter. *Crisis in Turkey: Just Another Bump on the Road to Europe?* Occasional Paper no. 67. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2007.

Public Broadcasting Service. "'Biblioburro' in Context: Columbia in Conflict: Government Response | Biblioburro: The Donkey Library." *POV*. July 19, 2011. http://www.pbs.org/pov/biblioburro/photo_gallery_background.php?photo=4#.Uz8jQBB7SnQ.

Russell, James A. *Innovation, Transformation, and War: Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq, 2005–2007*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011.

Sayari, Sabri, and Bruce Hoffman. *Urbanization and Insurgency: The Turkish Case, 1976–1980*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1991.

Simons, Geoff Leslie. *Colombia: A Brutal History*. London: Saqi, 2004.

Stanford University. "Mapping Militant Organizations." http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/.

Stanford University. "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army | Mapping Militant Organizations." Last modified August 13, 2012. http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/89.

Taber, Robert. *The War of the Flea: A Study of Guerilla Warfare Theory and Practice*. New York: Citadel Press, 1970.

U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Training Center–Afghanistan (CTC-A). *A Counterinsurgent's Guidebook: The application of COIN doctrine and theory, Version 2*. Kabul, Afghanistan: CTC-A, 2011.

UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office (ACO). *Education Factsheet*. Kabul, Afghanistan: ACO, 2011. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/ACO_Education_Factsheet_-_November_2011_.pdf.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1. Defense Technical Information Center
   Ft. Belvoir, Virginia

2. Dudley Knox Library
   Naval Postgraduate School
   Monterey, California